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ABSTRACT

The National Rural Studies Committee seeks to identify important rural problems and encourage scholarly work on such problems. This annual meeting focused on the relationships between rural poverty and race relations and between rural and urban problems. Individual papers are: (1) "The Rural South as Seen by a Historical Geographer," by Charles Aiken; (2) "Home Sweet Home: Perspectives on the Culture and Politics of Shelter," by Carol Stack; (3) "Interdependent Development: Evidence and Policy," by Edward Bergman; (4) "Persistent Low Income Areas in the United States: Some Conceptual Challenges," by David L. Brown and Mildred Warner; (5) "Rural People in Poverty: Persistent versus Temporary Poverty," by Peggy J. Ross and Elizabeth S. Morrissey; (6) "Down South: The Inferior Country?" by William Howarth; (7) "Halfway Home--How Do We Get the Rest of the Way?" by William Winter; (8) "The Land-Grant University and Economic Development," by Walter Washington; (9) "Public Education in the Rural South," by David L. Powe; (10) "The Delta Project: A Perspective for Social and Economic Research and Development," by Arthur G. Cosby; (11) "Traditional and Alternative Agriculture," by Chip Morgan; and (12) "Politics in a Small Delta Town," by Robert Gray. (SV)

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National Rural Studies Committee

a proceedings

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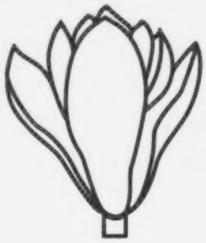
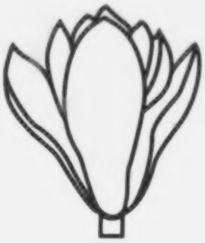


second annual meeting
sposored by
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

proceedings published by the
Western Rural Development Center
at Oregon State University
Edited by Emery Castle and
Barbara Baldwin

Preface



These proceedings resulted from the second annual meeting of the National Rural Studies Committee. The Committee, made possible by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, has as its objective the identification of important rural problems and the encouragement of work by those in higher education. The first meeting was held at Hood River, Oregon. The meeting which generated these proceedings was held at Greenville, Mississippi.

Even though these annual meetings are designed to illuminate important national problems that exist in rural areas, they are also organized to investigate important regional and local issues. An important component of the Hood River meeting pertained to natural resource and environmental policy. Not surprisingly, these proceedings reflect concerns about rural poverty and race relations which are, of course, interrelated. As the paper by Brown and Warner details, a disproportionate number of areas that are persistently in poverty have a significant percentage of minorities in their populations.

The extent to which rural and urban problems are interconnected, or are merely different manifestations of an underlying social condition, was also addressed by several of those who participated. It seems clear from these papers that there is indeed interdependency between the rural and the urban. But it also seems clear that many rural issues are sufficiently distinct that special attention is justified.

These annual meetings of the National Rural Studies Committee are not intended to provide answers or policy solutions to all of the problems which are identified. Even so, insights are often provided as to social adjustments that might be made. The Greenville meeting was very productive in this respect. Economic development policies, leadership development education and non-discrimination and affirmative action policies all were explored.

Additional regional meetings of the National Rural Studies Committee will be held. There will be a meeting in the mid-West in the Spring of 1990 and one in the Northeast in 1991. From these meetings and other activities of the National Rural Studies Committee it is hoped the Committee can discharge the responsibility it has assumed to evaluate and encourage rural America as an appropriate focus of scholarly study by those in higher education. Such studies clearly are appropriate for many disciplines and fields. In attendance at Greenville were individuals educated in literature, sociology, anthropology, history, geography, regional science, law, economics, agricultural economics, political science, animal science, plant science and engineering.

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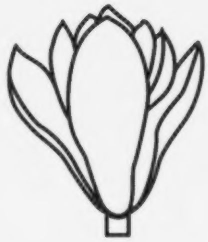
The Rural South as Seen by a Historical Geographer

Charles S. Aiken*



During the past half century the rural South has undergone sweeping changes. To review these changes in a few pages seems an overwhelming task, for the rural South is a large and diverse part of the nation. Many of the alterations that have occurred during the past fifty years are not well documented, and some are unstudied. There is, however, a certain amount of excitement in the challenge. For a geographer, the transformation of the rural South over the past 50 years is fascinating, and it affords the opportunity to study complete processes of landscape evolution and regional change. In this paper I will limit discussion of changes in the rural South to four major topics: spatial alterations in agriculture, population redistribution and accompanying changes in rural settlement patterns, impact of the Civil Rights Movement, and emergence of a new concept of two types of South. To shorten and facilitate the discussion, I will confine my remarks primarily to the Lowland South.

Spatial Changes in Agriculture

Analysis of a few elementary statistics reveals major changes have occurred in Southern agriculture since 1940 (Table 1). Between 1940 and 1982 land in farms in the South declined from 370 to 294 million acres, harvested cropland decreased from 103 to 80 million acres, and the number of farms declined from three million to 897,000. In Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, the heart of the Lowland South, declines are even more dramatic. Land in farms decreased 43.7 percent and cropland harvested, 38.2 percent between 1940 and 1982.

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*University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Table 1. Changes in Farms, Land in Farms, and Cropland Harvested, 1940-1982

THE SOUTH

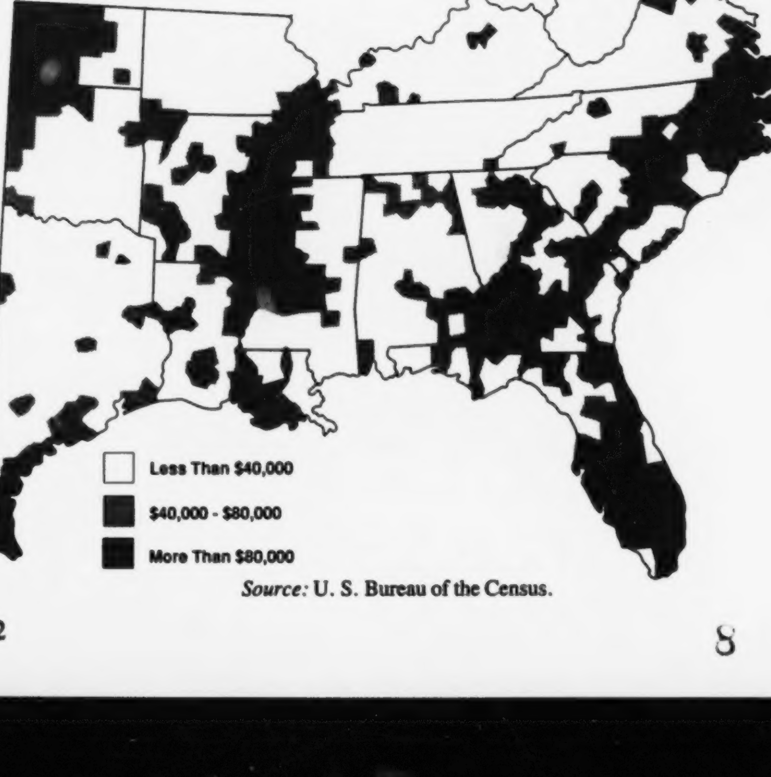
	Number of Farms	Acres Land in Farms	Acres Cropland Harvested
1940	3,007,107	370,169,000	103,290,000*
1982	896,591	292,794,000	80,279,000
Difference 1940-1982	−2,110,579	−76,375,000	−23,011,000
% Difference 1940-1982	−70.2%	−20.6%	−22.3%

ALABAMA, GEORGIA, MISSISSIPPI

	Number of Farms	Acres Land in Farms	Acres Cropland Harvested
1940	738,871	61,983,000	22,387,000*
1982	140,493	34,914,000	13,826,000
Difference 1940-1982	− 598,378	−27,069,000	− 8,561,000
% Difference 1940-1982	−81.0%	−43.7%	−38.2%

*—Harvested cropland figures are for 1939
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 1. Average Value Per Farm of Agricultural Products Sold, 1982.



Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census.

Although these figures are important in themselves, they also allude to major geographical changes which they do not reveal. The decline in land in farms and in cropland has not been uniform across the South. While some agricultural regions, including the Southern Piedmont, experienced declines so great that they are now essentially extinct as crop regions, other areas, including portions of the alluvial Mississippi Valley, had increases in cropland. The major geographical trend during the past 50 years is concentration of agriculture in a few regions (Hart 1967; 1978). In 1982 most of the South's agriculture (exclusive of Texas and Oklahoma) was in three regions: the lower Mississippi valley; the inner coastal plain of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Alabama; and central and southern Florida (Figure 1).

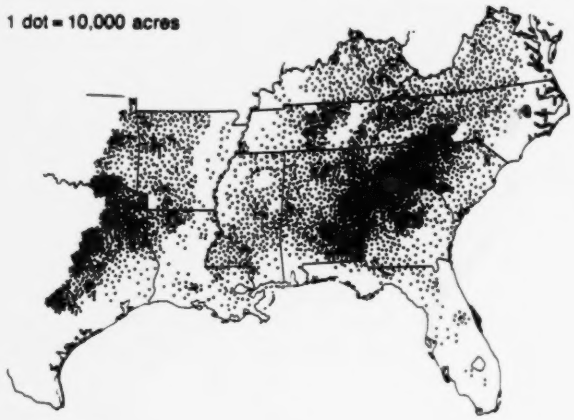
The regions that contain most of the South's agriculture are fully modern, and they rank among America's major agricultural areas in technology and productivity. Historically, however, these areas were perceived as inferior to others that are now virtually extinct as agricultural regions. The sandy-soil areas of the Inner Coastal Plain became important for agriculture only after the introduction of commercial fertilizer following the Civil War. Most of the alluvial Mississippi Valley was still forested in 1900 with settlement impeded by poor drainage and malaria. Florida, which in 1986 ranked first among the southeastern states and ninth among the fifty states in value of agricultural products, is a twentieth century place (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1988, 627). Some areas of Florida that are now citrus orchards and vegetable and sugar cane fields, 50 years ago were open-range ranch country and swamp. (Mealor and Prunty 1976).

During the decline and concentration of agriculture, cotton lost its lofty position. Fifty years ago cotton was still the fulcrum of Southern agriculture, and the Cotton Belt was the agricultural heart of the South. In 1929, the last agricultural census before the imposition of federal crop controls, the Southern States (exclusive of Texas and Oklahoma) planted 23.5 million acres to cotton. By 1982 cotton had declined to 2.9 million acres, and the crop accounted for only eleven percent of farm income in the Southeastern States, surpassed in value by vegetables, orchard fruits, and soybeans (Healy 1985, 24-25; Luke 1989).

Large areas of the South that once were important agriculturally have almost gone out of crop production (Figure 2). These regions include the Southern Piedmont; the Alabama-Mississippi Black Belt (or Prairie Belt), the Ridge and Valley in Alabama and eastern Tennessee, and the Nashville Basin in Middle Tennessee.[1] Across these areas much of the land has reverted to forest or lies idle, covered by broom sedge and tree saplings. The agriculture that survives occurs in islands, areas where the declines have not been as great (Prunty and C. Aiken 1972). Scattered among the forests and the old fields are the relics and fossils of a bygone agriculture. Large tracts in extinct agricultural regions are now owned and leased by timber products companies, and land that 50 years ago grew cotton and corn now produces pulpwood.

Another important type of change that is implied but not revealed in agricultural statistics is spatial restructuring of Southern farms. Between 1940 and 1982, while the number of farms in the South declined from 3,000,107 to 896,591, the size of the average farm increased from 123 to 328 acres. In Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi the number of farms decreased 81 percent while average farm size increased from 84 to 242 acres. Also between 1940 and 1982, major changes occurred in the types of farmers and the acreage of land in farms and cropland controlled by them (Table 2). Since 1940 the importance of tenants has declined in Southern agriculture while the role of part owners has grown. In 1940 full owners comprised 44.2 percent of the South's farmers and had possession of 41.4 percent of the land in farms. Tenants comprised 48.2 percent of the farmers and controlled 33.2 percent of the land in farms. Only 7.2 percent of the farmers were part owners, and they controlled only 17.7 percent of the land in farms. By 1982 tenants had declined to 9.9 percent of the farmers and had only 12.5 percent of the land in farms. Part owners, however, had increased to 25.9 percent of the farmers, and they controlled nearly half of the land in farms.

Figure 2. Decrease in Cropland Harvested 1880-1982. Map by Thomas Frey.



Source: Healy 1985. Reproduced courtesy of The Conservation Foundation. From *Competition For Land in the American South*, 1985.

Table 2. Types of Farmers and Land in Farms, 1940 and 1982

THE SOUTH

	Full Owners		Part Owners		Tenants	
	Number	% of Farmers	Number	% of Farmers	Number	% of Farmers
1940	1,327,000	44.2	216,600	7.2	1,449,300	48.2
1982	575,500	64.2	232,600	25.9	88,400	9.9
Difference 1940-1982	− 752,200		16,000		−1,360,900	
% Difference 1940-1982	−56.7%		7.4%		−93.9%	
	Land in Farms	% Land in Farms	Land in Farms	% Land in Farms	Land in Farms	% Land in Farms
1940	153,366,000	41.4	65,515,000	17.7	123,013,000	33.2
1982	117,509,000	40.0	139,486,000	47.5	36,799,000	12.5
Difference 1940-1982	−35,857,000		73,971,000		−86,214,000	
% Difference 1940-1982	−23.4%		121.9%		−70.1%	

ALABAMA, GEORGIA, MISSISSIPPI

	Full Owners		Part Owners		Tenants	
	Number	% of Farmers	Number	% of Farmers	Number	% of Farmers
1940	245,100	33.2	32,500	4.4	458,900	62.1
1982	93,800	66.8	36,500	26.0	10,200	7.2
Difference 1940-1982	− 151,300		4,000		− 448,700	
% Difference 1940-1982	−61.5%		12.3%		−97.8%	
	Land in Farms	% Land in Farms	Land in Farms	Land in Farms	Land in Farms	% Land in Farms
1940	28,363,000	45.8	5,052,000	8.2	26,243,000	42.3
1982	16,009,000	45.9	16,309,000	46.7	2,596,000	7.4
Difference 1940-1982	−12,354,000		11,257,000		−23,647,000	
% Difference 1940-1982	−43.6%		222.8%		−90.1%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

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[1] The poultry industry of the Georgia Piedmont is not land based. Most of the feed grain is imported from the Middle West.

The growth in farm size and in the importance of part owners alludes to another major spatial alteration that has occurred in Southern agriculture. In order to achieve economies of scale to support larger machinery inventories and to increase profits, farmers began renting as well as purchasing additional land. Because a farmer frequently is not able to purchase or rent land next to what he already owns, the increase in farm size has been accompanied by the growth in importance of "fragmented" or "dispersed" farm operations. Next to spatial concentration, the development of fragmented farms has been the most significant geographical trend in southern agriculture during the past 50 years.

Paul S. Taylor, who during the 1930s traveled widely across the American agricultural regions, was one of the earliest to note the emerging role of farms comprised of dispersed parcels (Taylor 1941). Geographers at the University of Georgia in the 1960s were among the first to identify and study fragmented farms in the South (Fisher 1967, 153; C. Aiken 1971; Sublet 1975, 16-18).

There are different types and sizes of fragmented farms, but still relatively little is known concerning them. The dated format of the U. S. Census of Agriculture provides hardly any information. The best surrogate data in the Census of Agriculture are those for part owners. It can be assumed that most farmers who own and rent are not always able to purchase or lease land next to that they already control.

One type of dispersed farm that has emerged in the South is the "fragmented neoplantation" (C. Aiken 1971). This farm meets all of the criteria for a plantation except for the way in which the land is defined. Historically, in the South a plantation was defined as a continuous tract or separate tracts of land in close proximity under one ownership (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1915, 13). A fragmented neoplantation is composed of a headquarters farm, which is usually owned; dispersed farms, which are both rented and owned; and fields on landholdings where only crop bases are rented (Aiken 1971, 44). Most fragmented neoplantations are several thousand acres in size and may be spread over areas of several hundred square miles. The 3,500 acre Presley fragmented neoplantation in Tate County, Mississippi, consists of a headquarters farm, six rented farms, and rented cotton bases on six landholdings. The 5,000 acre Vandiver neoplantation in the Tennessee Valley of northern Alabama has only a 160 acre headquarters farm. The remainder of the acreage is rented from 34 landlords (C. Aiken 1971, 44-46). Fragmented neoplantations are common in the Yazoo Delta where many landholdings that were traditional-type plantations in 1940 have been integrated through purchase and rental agreements into even larger operations.

Population Redistribution and Changes in Rural Settlement Patterns

In 1940 the South was a rural place; more than half of the population was rural. Today, the majority of Southerners are urban. Only 33.1 percent of the population is rural. In 1940, 39.2 percent of the South's total population and 62.0 percent of the rural population resided on farms (Table 3). By 1980 the farm population had declined to 2.3 percent of the total and to 7.1 percent of the rural population. In Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi the decline in importance of the rural farm but growth of the rural nonfarm population is just as dramatic. These statistics, as the ones for agriculture, allude to more than they reveal. Underlying the figures are redistribution of the rural population and change in rural settlement patterns.

Most studies of population redistribution in the United States treat inter-regional movements. Rarely do studies penetrate below the county level. But the most profound changes in population distribution have

Table 3. Changes in Population 1940-1980

THE SOUTH

	Total Population	Rural Population	% of Total	Farm Population	% of Total	Rural Nonfarm Population	% of Total
1940	41,666,000	26,375,000	66.3	16,344,000	39.2	10,032,000	24.1
1980	75,372,000	29,958,000	33.1	1,777,000	2.3	23,181,000	30.8
Difference 1940-1980	33,706,000	1,417,000		− 14,567,000		13,149,000	
% Difference 1940-1980	80.9%	5.4%		− 89.1%		131.1%	

ALABAMA, GEORGIA, MISSISSIPPI

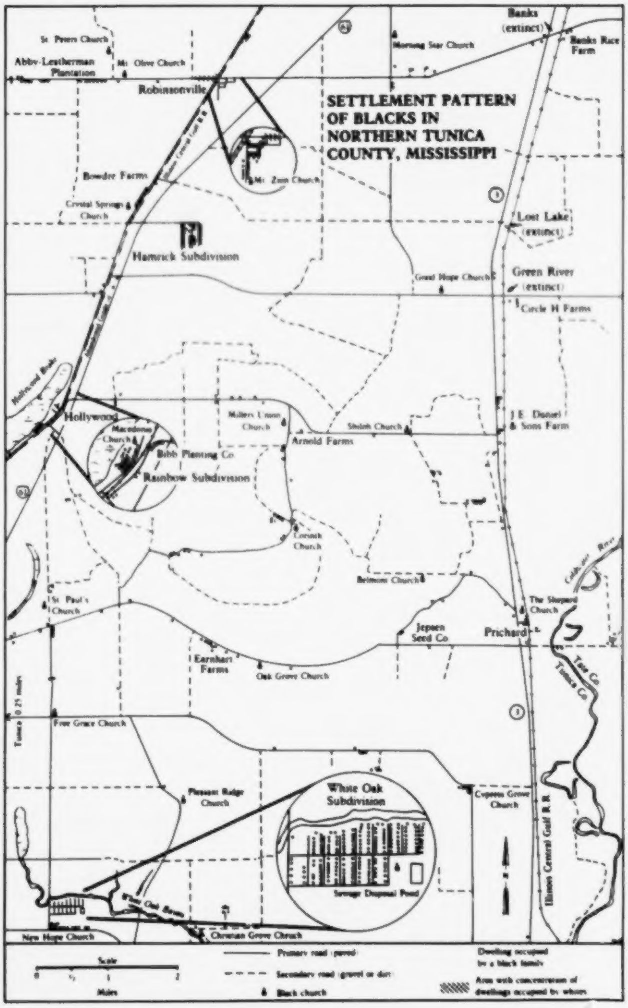
	Total Population	Rural Population	% of Total	Farm Population	% of Total	Rural Nonfarm Population	% of Total
1940	8,141,000	5,778,000	71.0	4,103,000	50.4	1,675,000	20.6
1980	11,878,000	4,938,000	41.6	294,000	2.5	4,644,000	39.1
Difference 1940-1980	3,737,000	− 840,000		− 3,809,000		2,969,000	
% Difference 1940-1980	45.9%	− 14.5%		− 92.8%		177.3%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

occurred within counties at the local scale. Historically, most of the South's rural population was dispersed across farms and plantations. The dominant recent spatial trend is nucleation. Concentration of rural people in several new types of geographical situations occurred with the decline in the farm and growth in the rural nonfarm population. Unincorporated hamlets are important parts of the newly emerged settlement pattern (Figure 3). The hamlets are of two basic types: unplanned assemblages of dwellings and planned subdivisions.

Unplanned assemblages of dwellings often begin as settlements of extended families. Parents give or sell to children from a farm small lots on which to build houses or place mobile homes. Splitting off lots for children may also occur on adjoining farms. Eventually lots may be sold to nonfamily members, and over a few years a group of a dozen or more dwellings evolves.

Figure 3. Settlement Pattern of Blacks in Northern Tunica County, Mississippi.


SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF BLACKS IN NORTHERN TUNICA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
St. Peters Church
Abby-Leatherman Plantation
Mt. Olive Church
Morning Star Church
Banks (extinct)
Banks Race Farm
Robinsonville
Bowdre Farms
Mt. Zion Church
Crystal Springs Church
Lost Lake (extinct)
Hamrick Subdivision
Good Hope Church
Green River (extinct)
Circle H Farms
Hollywood Bayou
Hollywood
Macedonia Church
Bibb Planting Co.
Rainbow Subdivision
Millers Union Church
Arnold Farms
Shiloh Church
J. E. Daniel & Sons Farm
Corinth Church
Belmont Church
St. Paul's Church
The Shepard Church
Jepsen Seed Co.
Prichard
Earnhart Farms
Oak Grove Church
Tate Co.
Tunica Co.
Tunica 0.25 miles
Free Grace Church
Pleasant Ridge Church
White Oak Subdivision
Sewage Disposal Pond
Cypress Grove Church
Illinois Central Gulf R.R.
White Oak Bayou
New Hope Church
Christian Grove Church
Scale
0 ½ 1 2
Miles
Primary road (paved)
Secondary road (gravel or dirt)
Black church
Dwelling occupied by a black family
Area with concentration of dwellings occupied by whites

Source: C. Aiken, *Geographical Review*, 1985. Reproduced courtesy of the American Geographical Society of New York.

Twenty-five years ago official county subdivision plat books rarely contained maps of planned subdivisions that were not parts of incorporated places. Today, examination of plat books in almost any nonmetropolitan county in the South reveals pages of new subdivisions, many of which are located in the countryside. Developers have found ready markets for rural subdivision lots among urbanites, including retirees who want a home in the country, but the major market is the growing local rural nonfarm population.

Among the few studies that have assessed rural subdivisions is one of Loudon County, Tennessee (Williams 1982). Loudon is a nonmetropolitan county that adjoins the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Region. In 1982 Loudon County had 112 planned rural subdivisions, all but six of which were developed after 1954. Analysis of the inhabitants revealed that 47 percent had relocated from other parts of the county, primarily from dispersed farm dwellings. Five major types of rural subdivisions were identified, ranging from simple ones that were created by surveying lots along existing roads to large complex developments with numerous new roads (Williams 1982, 12-20).

In particular areas of the rural South, primarily in the Upland South but in some places in the Lowland, large, densely-populated, rural settlement complexes have evolved. These complexes have certain characteristics of metropolitan suburban fringes, but they are not parts of metropolitan areas. A federal or state highway usually is the arterial focus. Along the highway and close to it on side roads are numerous dwellings, many of which might be in planned subdivisions. Interspersed among the dwellings are various businesses including grocery stores, convenient markets, farm and garden supply stores, and barber and beauty shops. Small factories are located near major crossroads or on railroad sidings. The complex functions spatially as a town or small city, and the largest of such complexes may actually include one or more small municipalities. Although these new rural settlement complexes are largely unstudied, in some areas of the South including the Ridge and Valley in eastern Tennessee, Sand Mountain in northern Alabama, and the Upper Piedmont in the Carolinas and Georgia, large portions of the rural population are concentrated in them.

The changes that have occurred in population distribution and in settlement patterns have varied from region to region. The black population of the Yazoo Delta is illustrative of how sweeping the changes have been for one group of people in one nonmetropolitan region. Historically blacks in the Delta were an essential part of the plantation system. In 1940, 89 percent of the 313,214 blacks in the eleven county region of the Delta were rural farmers. Most were members of tenant families, primarily sharecropper families. The settlement pattern was a dispersed one; houses of sharecroppers were scattered across the cotton fields (Prunty 1955, 467-474).

Beginning in the 1930s with the reduction of cotton acreage under the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the commencement of large-scale agricultural mechanization with the introduction of tractors, plantations began to be reorganized spatially. After World War II mechanization proceeded rapidly with the introduction of mechanical cotton pickers followed by the adoption of herbicides for weed control. As plantations were mechanized, the labor system changed from one that used sharecroppers to one in which agricultural workers were paid cash wages. On most plantations the reorganization occurred in a series of stages as the new technology was adopted and the number of sharecroppers was reduced (C. Aiken 1987).

The demise of sharecropping was accompanied by major alterations in the settlement pattern of the Delta (Prunty 1955; 1962). Tenant houses dispersed across fields impeded efficient use of new agricultural machinery. Although most dwellings were razed, some were relocated to main roads to house machinery operators and the diminishing number of sharecroppers. During the past 15 years old houses on plantations increasingly have been replaced with small modern ones for the resident labor force. The dispersed plantation settlement pattern of 50 years ago has been superseded by a nucleated one.

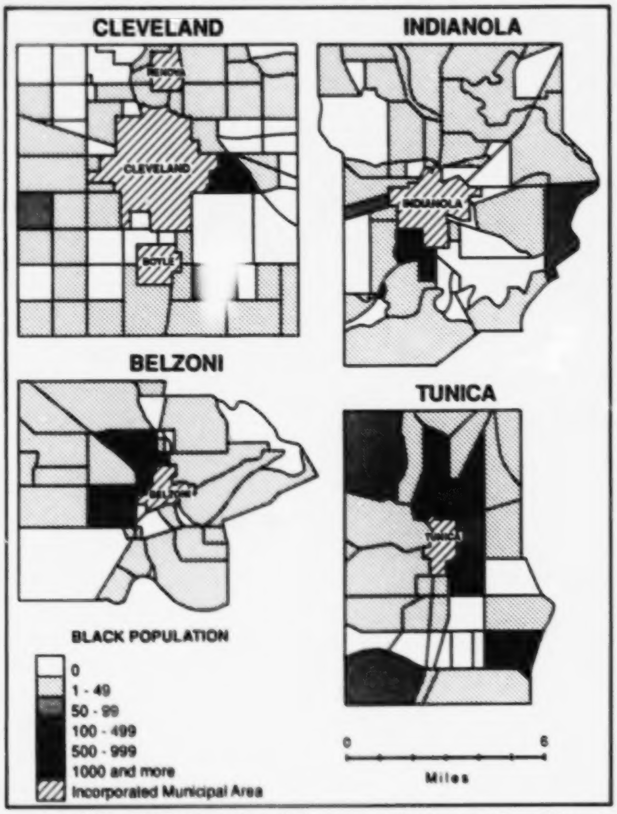
Reorganization of plantations was accompanied by a great exodus of blacks from the Yazoo Delta. The black population declined from 313,241 in 1940 to 178,296 in 1980 (C. Aiken 1987, 565-566). There also occurred a significant modification in the spatial distribution of the blacks who remained. In 1940, 80.8 percent of the blacks in the Yazoo Delta resided on farms; only 11.2 percent were urban. By 1980 the black farm population had declined to 3.1 percent of the total. The percent of the black population that was urban had increased to 46.0. Rural-nonfarm had become the dominant category, comprising 50.9 percent of the region's black population.

Mississippi was one of five states in 1980 for which the Bureau of the Census prepared small block data for all rural as well as urban areas. By using block data in combination with field analysis it was possible to analyze the microscale distribution of the black population in the Delta. The trend toward urbanization is much greater than indicated by summary census figures. In 1980, 12.1 percent of the blacks in the Delta resided in rural towns, incorporated places with populations less than 2,500. More important, almost 20 percent of the black population lived within one mile of the corporate limits of municipalities and functionally was part of them. In 1980, 77.2 percent of the black population in the Delta was municipal and only 22.8 percent was "open-countryside" rural (C. Aiken 1987, 567-568). Much of the "open countryside" population was concentrated in planned subdivisions, some of which were sponsored by federal agencies, and in unplanned assemblages of dwellings. White Oak, located in Tunica County near the town of Tunica, is an example of a FmHA subdivision (Figure 4).

Two factors are paramount in explaining the large concentrations of rural-nonfarm blacks on the margins of towns and cities: location decisions for federally funded housing and refusal of white controlled municipal governments to annex black residential areas.

In 1960, almost 50 percent of the occupied dwellings in the Delta were dilapidated or deteriorated (C. Aiken 1987, 569). Since the beginning of the War on Poverty in the 1960s, the Farmers Home Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have spent more than 200 million dollars to improve housing in the region. Single-family dwellings for home ownership, public housing, and multi-family rental projects have been funded by the agencies. The improvement in the quality of housing has been profound. Forty-two percent of the housing units in the

Figure 4. Black Population of Rural Census Blacks Surrounding Cleveland, Indianola, Belzoni, and Tunica, Mississippi, 1980.



Source: C. Aiken 1987. Reproduced Courtesy of the Association of American Geographers.

Delta occupied by blacks in 1980 had been constructed since 1960 (C. Aiken 1987, 569).

With regard to location, federally funded housing in the Delta tends to follow lines of least resistance. One type of location is on the margins, but not within the political limits, of municipalities. Although the municipalities provide utilities and other services to the new residential areas, which with a few exceptions are predominantly black, they refuse to annex them primarily because addition of large numbers of blacks would dilute white voting strength. In 1980, 12 of the 57 municipalities in the Delta underbounded their actual populations at levels that was statistically significant. Among them were Indianola, Cleveland, and Belzoni (C. Aiken 1987, 567-574) (Figure 4). On the southern edge of Indianola, subdivisions of new, brick-veneer houses, including ones with FmHA 502 dwellings and a 264-unit HUD Section 23 leased public housing project, sprawl across the landscape interspersed with FmHA Section 515 apartment complexes. Although the housing was built primarily under Republican administrations, symbolically the area is Lyndon Johnson's Great Society (C. Aiken 1987, 572-574).

Impact of the Civil Rights Movement

In the twentieth century a few great events have brought profound changes to the South. Among them is the Civil Rights Movement. The changes that were begun between 1954 and 1970 continue to make their impact.

The two principal goals of the Civil Rights Movement were the restoration of voting rights to blacks and the termination of legalized segregation. Three critical events were paramount in initiating the changes sought by blacks. The U. S. Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. the School Board of Topeka, Kansas, reversed the 1896 "separate but equal" decision of Plessy vs. Ferguson and led to the integration of public school systems. The Civil Rights Act passed by Congress in 1964 desegregated other public facilities, and passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act insured blacks that devious means could not be used to keep them from voting or geographically expressing their political power.

Most of the research on the Civil Rights Movement and its impact in the South has focused on urban areas. Not only did a number of important events of the Civil Rights Movement occur in the rural South, including the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer and the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery across the heart of the Alabama Black Belt, but also the impact on the rural South has been just as profound as on the urban.

The initial reaction of many whites in the rural South to the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court decision was to deny the possibility of the school systems ever actually being desegregated. Between 1955 and 1957 more than 500 bills designed to circumvent or nullify the Supreme Court decision were passed by southern legislatures (Goldfield 1987, 68). To further insure that schools would not be desegregated, in the mid-1950s, for the first time in the history of public education in the South, funding for black schools began to approach that for white ones. Traditionally, more than four times the amount spent per black pupil was spent per white pupil in rural counties, and as late as 1954 many black children in the rural South did not have access to public high schools (Johnson 1941, 25). New elementary and high schools began to be built for blacks, replacing legions of one- and two-room schools scattered across the rural countryside.

As late as 1954 many black children in the rural South did not have access to public high schools.

When in the 1960s desegregation became inevitable, communities reacted in different ways (M. Aiken and Demerath 1968). A reaction by some whites was to abandon public schools for private ones. Numerous private academies sprang up across the South, sometimes occupying buildings of closed white public schools that were sold.

Today across the rural South most children attend integrated public schools. However, as in the nation's cities, in rural counties geographical patterns have emerged in which particular schools may be predominantly white or predominantly black (Thompson 1988b). These patterns are reflections of both increased residential segregation in the restructuring of rural settlement patterns and the gerrymandering of school district boundaries. Private schools in the rural South are strongest in areas where the school-age population is more than 50 percent black. Maps of the larger towns in the heart of the plantation South usually show three school buildings. In the center of the town is a building that housed the white public school during the era of segregation. The building may be abandoned or used as the integrated elementary or middle school. In the town's black residential area is the building that once was the black public school. Usually, it is a large brick structure constructed in the late 1950s as part of the program to maintain equal as well as separate public school systems. At the edge of the town is a private academy that was established by whites who did not wish to send their children to public schools.

With restoration of voting rights, blacks again have come to play a major role in the politics of the South. At the section and state levels political realignments occurred, and the structures and strengths of the Democratic and Republican parties changed. Who in 1940 would have predicted that in 1989 both U. S. Senators from Mississippi would be Republicans? Or who in 1964 would have thought that by the 1980s the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party would have been merged with the state's Democratic Party?

Although southern blacks have come to play vital roles in local, state, and national elections, they have not been very successful in seeking election to major political offices. In 1988 the southern states had no black U. S. Senators and only five black Representatives (Joint Center for Political Studies 1989, 12-13). All but one of the Representatives were from metropolitan areas. The Second Mississippi Congressional District, which is essentially the Yazoo Delta, is the only nonmetropolitan one represented by a black Congressman.

At the local level blacks have been more successful in pursuit of political office. In 1988 almost all of the 4,446 black elected officials in the South held local offices (Joint Center for Political Studies 1989, 11). Significant growth in the number of black elected officials occurred as the 1965 Voting Rights Act increasingly had an impact. In 1973 Mississippi had 152 black elected officials; in 1988 there were 578 (Joint Center for Political Studies 1973, xvi; 1989, 12).

> Election of a black majority government usually means exodus of a significant part of the white population. . .

Even with the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was extended in 1982, much of the local political progress that blacks have made in the rural South has been achieved through court suits and boycotts. Using the 1965 Voting Rights Act, blacks have brought numerous court suits seeking changes in the ways in which officials are elected and in the geographical boundaries of voting districts. One type of suit seeks to have at-large elections replaced with a system of districts or wards. Another type of court suit seeks to have majority black districts and wards created.

In December, 1988, blacks were elected to the Dallas County, Alabama Commission for the first time since Reconstruction and 23 years after passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The legal struggle to have three majority-black districts created in this nonmetropolitan county where 55 percent of the population is black was in the federal courts for ten years (Nossiter 1989). Also in 1988 plaintiffs won a voting rights lawsuit which sought to have multiple election districts created in Telfair County, Georgia, one of 24 nonmetropolitan counties in the state which use one-commissioner county governments as a method to keep blacks from being elected to office (Thompson 1988a).

As stated above, one of the reasons that some white controlled municipal governments in the Yazoo Delta refuse to annex black residential areas is fear that white voting strength will be diluted. In 1980 the black residents of the southern fringe of Indianola initiated under the 1965 Voting Rights Act what was to become a lengthy court case which sought annexation of their neighborhoods. In settlement of the case the U. S. District Court enjoined Indianola to annex by January 1, 1989, an area that includes all of the federally sponsored housing on the south side of the city (C. Aiken 1987, 574-577).

Increasing election of blacks to county and municipal offices in the rural South means that biracial government is emerging. Although biracial government is the norm, there are counties and municipalities that have become politically controlled by blacks. Geographically, clusters of counties and small municipalities with majority black governments have begun to emerge across the nonmetropolitan South. In Mississippi black elected officials now control part of the old Natchez plantation district and parts of the Yazoo Delta. Twenty-three municipalities have black mayors and majority black governments.

The reaction of whites of small Southern cities and towns to blacks assuming political control is similar to that of whites of inner cities of the nation's metropolises. Election of a black majority government usually means exodus of a significant part of the white population, especially if the election has been preceded by significant opposition by whites to blacks holding political offices (C. Aiken 1989). One of the most detailed analyses of blacks assuming political control of a Southern county and city is Norrell's study of Macon County and Tuskegee, Alabama (1985). A long tragic history of whites attempting to impede political participation by blacks ended in 1972 with the transfer of political control of both the county and the city to blacks. This was followed by a precipitous decline of the white population of Tuskegee between 1970 and 1980, a decline that continued through the 1980s.

The Two American Souths

The impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the South extends beyond benefits to blacks, for whites profit from no longer having to defend segregation. Economically, the passing of desegregation by law and the restoration of voting rights to blacks helped pave the way for the emergence of the Sun Belt South of the late twentieth century. But all areas have not shared equally in recent economic progress.

There are several different concepts of two American Souths. Well before the Civil War the Upland South with its white yeoman farmer tradition was recognized as a region that was distinct from the Lowland South with its plantation tradition. When after the Civil War the idea of a New South was created, the concept of an Old South had to be invented as the counterpart. Since the colonial period an urban South has existed that is economically and culturally distinct from the rural South. During the past decade yet another concept of two Souths has been identified. As the Modern South began to emerge, there developed realization that not all areas shared equally in the economic progress. There is a South that is doing well economically, but there is another South that is left behind. Figuratively, there is the "Sunbelt South," and there are "shadows in the Sunbelt."

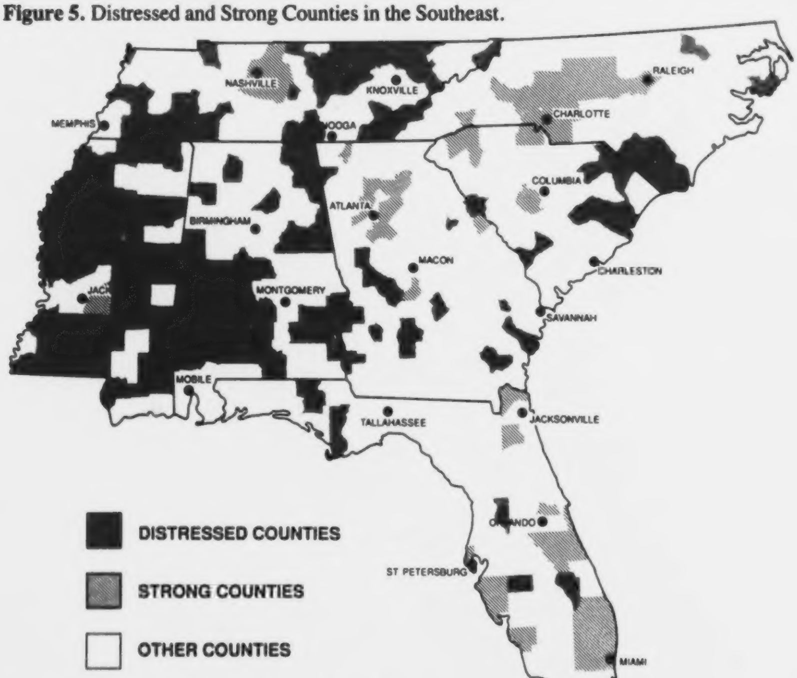
This recent concept of two Souths emerged in part from the Southern Research Policies Board at Research Triangle, North Carolina (*e.g.*, MDC 1986; Southern Governors Association 1986; Southern Growth Policies Board 1986). Not without controversy, the new concept of two Souths has been aggressively promoted by a group of politicians, business leaders, and academicians. The new concept of two Souths not only seeks economic and social improvements in the areas that have been left behind, but it also outlines in generalities how economic growth is to be sustained in the Sunbelt areas. Great emphasis is placed on improvements in elementary and secondary education, on the role of local leadership, and on the importance of local initiative and innovation in the creation of new jobs. Geographically, the new concept of two Souths recognizes that the Southern states are part of, not just a national, but a world economy.

The South that is doing well economically consists largely of the metropolitan areas, the first tier of nonmetropolitan counties surrounding the metropolitan ones, and a group of dispersed nonmetropolian counties that are removed from metropolitan areas. The South that is left behind is essentially the remainder of the nonmetropolitan counties; that is, the South that is left behind is a large part of the rural South.

A recent map prepared by the Appalachian Regional Commission subdivides the Southeast into three principal types of areas on the basis of socioeconomic factors (Figure 5). The counties with the greatest problems are those in the "stressed" category. Among the regions with the largest numbers of "stressed" counties are the Yazoo Delta, the Alabama Black Belt, and the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. These areas have in common a high rate of poverty, high unemployment, low educational level, and nonmetropolitan situation.

Fundamental to addressing the problems of the rural South that is left behind is realization that it is not a homogeneous place but one of great geographical, social, and economic diversity. Major differences exist among the regions. Programs designed to improve conditions in one region may not work well in another region. The differences among regions include well-known ones such as racial contrasts between the Upland and the Lowland South. Lesser known are differences in age structure of the population, attitudes towards schools and formal education, and composition of local economies. Also, it is important to distinguish the areas that have a strong, but specialized, local economy from areas in which the local economy has largely collapsed. Both the Yazoo Delta and the Alabama Black Belt are placed in the "stressed" category on the Appalachian Regional Commission map. The Yazoo Delta has a strong agricultural economy and a large underemployed population that cannot be fully absorbed by the modern agricultural system. In parts of the Alabama Black Belt the agricultural economy is largely gone and a new, local, rural economy that can fully absorb the underemployed population has not developed.

Figure 5. Distressed and Strong Counties in the Southeast.



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission.

Conclusion

Why did some agricultural regions decline and others remain viable? Why did certain communities handle integration and restoration of voting rights to blacks better than others? Why are there municipalities and counties across the nonmetropolitan South that have made significant economic progress and others that have been left behind? Does some overriding factor explain spatial variability in the rural South?

Twenty-seven years ago William Faulkner was invited to Greenville to address a meeting of the Delta Council, an organization of agricultural and business leaders. The 5,000 persons who heard Faulkner gave him a standing ovation, and the Delta Council later published the speech as a pamphlet. To most of those present the speech came off as an attack on the Federal government with its programs and bureaus seeking regimentation and as a patriotic call for a return to the America that was envisioned by the founders (Blotner 1974, 1417).

Analysis of the speech, however, reveals that the major theme is neither patriotism nor an attack on the federal government, but the theme of responsibility (C. Aiken 1982, 201).[2] "That's what I am talking about: responsibility," stated Faulkner. "Not just the right, but the duty of man to be responsible, the necessity of man to be responsible if he wishes to remain free; not just responsible to and for his fellow man, but to himself" (Faulkner 1952, 42). The theme of responsibility is tied directly to another powerful theme in Faulkner's works, that of leadership decline and failure (C. Aiken 1982, 193-202).

. . . the agricultural economy is largely gone and a new, local, rural economy that can fully absorb the underemployed population has not developed.

Although Faulkner's stories of Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, are universal in their meaning, the reality from which he drew his fiction was principally the rural and small-town Lowland South. That Faulkner developed the theme of leadership decline and failure in his fiction, and in one of his few public addresses to fellow rural Southerners stressed responsibility, indicates that he believed that one of the major problems was a crisis in leadership. Others persons, more recently and in a much more direct way than Faulkner, have identified leadership as one of the critical problems of the rural South (Winter 1987).

Leadership operates within historical dimension and at different geographical scales. Across the rural South isolated counties and municipalities that have viable economies usually can be explained on the basis of the quality of local leaders. Frequently this leadership lies in only one or two individuals. To explain the demise of large agricultural regions such as the Southern Piedmont one has to trace historically the loss of agricultural leaders at both the regional and local scales. In the small islands of the Piedmont where agriculture is still viable, endurance of local agricultural leadership is overt, taking precedence over any physical factor, including topography and soil, or any economic factor, including those of the infrastructure (Prunty and Aiken 1972).

At the sectional level the great significance of the new concept of two Souths is that it has the potential of making a major break from the economic and social philosophy that the South's leaders have followed over the past 125 years. The era when fiscal conservatism in government took precedence over basic needs of the people appears to be drawing to an end. In order to upgrade education and accomplish economic and social reforms that the new concept of two Souths acknowledges, larger sums of public funds will have to be spent. This will mean tax reform that should modify the regressive taxation policies of the Southern States.

For more than 100 years southern prophets have predicted the coming of a new and better South. Although the rural South is a vastly different and a much better place than it was 50 years ago, most rural southerners are too young to have known the South of the Great Depression. For them, improvement is not measured from 1939, but from today. Unfortunately, many rural southerners still live in such poor economic and social conditions that 1989 may seem no different than did 1939 to an earlier generation.

Acknowledgements

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[2] In the context of the Delta and its plantation agricultural system, Faulkner's theme of responsibility is tied directly to his stories of Isaac McCaslin and the vanishing Mississippi wilderness. See C. Aiken 1981; 1982.

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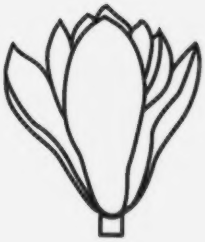
Home Sweet Home: Perspectives on the Culture and Politics of Shelter

Carol B. Stack*



My comments are based on my own ethnographic observations of diverse, multi-generational, African-American families and communities in the United States, studies that chronicle nearly fifty years of a population in motion bounded by an uninterrupted commitment to group survival. I have studied people moving between rural and urban spaces, as well as local family and community life in both places. Cyclical migration along well-worn paths between urban and rural locations in the North and South opens a window of vision to assess the language we are using and the discourse that has framed our concept of margin and center. Observing a population in motion requires close attention to the influence of intergenerational migration strategies as well as the interaction between cultural, economic, and historical forces. It provides us with a fulcrum for building connections between rural and urban. In essence, the weave between spaces grows strong, not from single strands or vantage points, but from the overlap of multiple perspectives.

The following notions frame my discussion:
Place and space
Cultural representation
Personhood
The culture and politics of shelter

The discussion of place and space locates a dialogue on conceptual frames in the context of the children of the

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Great Migration. Cultural representations of homefolk in cities, and of urbanites in the rural places, are viewed in light of new explanations of poverty and other social problems. The language of identity and belonging evokes claims of personhood and multiple selves. Finally, the tyranny of urban influences through political processes and policy dilemmas is illustrated in a case study of rural housing, the culture and politics of shelter.

Place and space

The northbound relocation of black America was for a long time an accepted theory among demographers, historians, anthropologists, and politicians. By the 1950s and 1960s, rural homeplaces in many regions of the south became congregations of children and old folks, emptied of their middle generations, as young adults sought jobs in the North. Channelized migration spread family ties like a fan from the homeplace to several northern cities. Each rural county engraved a distinctive pattern between the origin and a few selected destinations.

Despite dramatic discrimination against black workers in major northern cities, despite color bars in defense and other industries, discimination in housing, urban riots, and increasing urban crime, the migration north was seen by most scholars, myself included, as a one-way trek. Just as the return migration of 19th and 20th century immigrants who left the U.S. and moved back to their countries of origin were contrary to popular mythology (and only recently well-documented), the return migration of black families within the nation's boundaries contradicts conventional wisdom.

A glaring oversight from my early research in a northern black community is but one example of the power of conventional analytical schemas. Trained as an urban anthropologist in the 1960s, I had a decisive urban focus. Foremost, I was fascinated with family dynamics that entangle kin and resources across generations. At several moments during my study I noticed that children were missing. For example, first an eleven-year-old boy, Donald Williams, disappeared, and later in the same year Brenda Hampton, a twelve-year-old girl, vanished. When I asked where the children were, people said they had gone back to rural homeplaces, but no one made anything of it. I remember jotting a few words in my field notes that I set aside and disregarded. Conventional wisdom held that most migrants to northern cities would never go home.

In the early seventies I missed clues before my eyes that foretold the subject of my current study of return migration (a population movement that has been characterized as a "dramatic, unexpected" return of northern blacks to rural homeplaces). This reversal in the 1970s of a fifty-year-old migration trend reflects and sustains the maintenance of communication links that bound households over time and space.

During my current research, I could not possibly overlook the children of the Great Migration. Already back home for the second or third time from schools in Harlem, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, or D.C., many of the children were awaiting the return of their own parents, grandparents, and cousins. I dug up my old field notes that had been packed away for fifteen years. There the missing children were properly accounted for. I had simply lost track of children who were out of sight, even though the core of my study was the exchanges that surround sharing and transferring rights and responsibilities for children within extended families. What we miss, or "mis"-understand about people and history reveals more than what we share as common frames of reference. It is easier to learn what we anticipate and harder to glean the unexpected. Theory and conventional wisdom can overwhelm evidence, even in the presence of first-hand observation and experience.

Cultural representation

The closing boundaries between rural and urban systems influence how people are represented in scholarship, journals, the popular press, and in the discourse of policy makers. Representation reveals a great deal about categories of analysis. The extent to which rural and urban symbols infuse explanations of both has undergone a fascinating turnaround in the narratives of observers.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, urban dwellers were characterized as truly distinct from their rural counterparts, a claim extended even to fresh arrivals of migrants to urban centers. Early on, such scholars as British anthropologist Max Gluckman, observing urbanization in Africa, claimed with confidence, "A tribesman is a tribesman; a city dweller, a city dweller!" Trained as an urban anthropologist in the 1960s, I was initiated into this legacy, and moved forth to translate the wisdom of the times into frames of analysis useful for urban research in the United States. When I noticed that the kinship systems of second and third generation urban black families did not necessarily fall apart, and that contrary to some claims, given enough generational depth, multi-generational families arose in cities, social anthropologist Elizabeth Colson reminded me that the very first anthropological studies of urban life were accomplished before families could pass through the generational time required to produce grandchildren and grandparents.

Sometimes, frozen in the present, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians document a polarized continuum of movement from margin to center, from rural to urban places. Although one-way tickets to urban centers formed the words of the blues, as well as the visions of young migrants, we also witness evidence to the contrary.

In the *Atlantic Monthly,* July 1986, journalist Nicholas Lemann wrote a widely circulated two-part series titled "The Origins of the Underclass." In this long, well-written but troubling piece, the author attempts to document northbound migration, urban settlement, middle-class black movement out of inner cities to suburbs, and the relationship between each of these and the persistence of an urban underclass. In a bold unfolding of his explanation, Lemann invokes the "rural" to explain urban problems. He unabashedly attributes the cause of urban poverty to "share-cropper" values brought north. Without clarifying what they might be, but contrasting share-cropper and bourgeois values, he invokes aspects of rural culture to explain urban problems.

I couldn't disagree more with Lemann's explanation. Hard work from sunrise to sunset, immutable ties to land and family, and timeworn religiosity represent values that intersect with urban success stories. But whether one agrees or disagrees with Lemann, it is clear that between the fifties and eighties, discourse on the mutual influences of "rural" and "urban" has come full circle from oppositional discourse to blaming urban problems on rural values. Needless to say, the argument has again quickly reversed itself, following close on the heels of return migration, in particular the cyclical migration of children. Bringing children back into the picture, rural communities, especially schools, are encountering a steady stream of urban-defined problems.

Multiple residences are a way of life for thousands of children.

Rural places are changed by multiple urban influences. The school children who see-saw between rural and urban schools in isolated counties and Harlem, influence both settings. According to a recent United Nations survey, one-third of all interregional moves in the United States were made by children below the age of 15. Young children, and people below the age of 24 make up the vast majority of migration streams to third world cities, as high as 75 percent among men and 83 percent among women (United Nations, 1986, p. 40). Multiple residences are a way of life for thousands of children. Their journey back and forth reinforces and sustains families in both locations, and provides a line of communication. Preceding any dramatic reversal of a migration trend are the unsuspected traces of cyclical movers that pave the way. The journeys of children, who comprise nearly a third of the widely noticed return migration of black families to the South, are not new or one-time journeys. These children, as their parents before them, touch base and sustain both rural and urban lives. In addition, they reconstruct their own notions of rural life in light of their vivid urban experiences.

Personhood

Thelma Dillard, a young woman I interviewed two years after her return to rural South Carolina, speaks about identity and her sense of belonging: "I was glad that I could go to Philadelphia," she told me, "because I wanted to find out if I could go to a city and maintain. Carol, I could maintain that life, and I felt so good about myself. I can maintain in the country and in the city. Some people cannot move from the city to the country, or the country to the city, and live. I felt like I had an advantage. I could maintain in both places."

The language of identity and belonging is yet another key to defining the subject of inquiry. What counts? Do we define rural by place, identity, or by a dynamic interaction? There are city dwellers in the country and country folks in the city, as well as those who claim multiple identities including class, gender, religious preference, race consciousness, etc. Many people who left the rural south never defined themselves as urban. Likewise, thousands who return to rural places from the North experience multiple identities; they are homefolks whose identity is located in a richly textured experience of multiple places. Time, space, and memory configure identities as individuals and families pass through history. People value their multiple identities and alternately invoke different metaphors of self-definition in relation to context.

On the basis of long discussions, taped interviews, analysis of the text, and participant observation among men and women who returned to rural places, I witnessed gender differences in the politics of their return. In particular, men and women differed in their concepts of the geography of home and the nature of political involvement. Men and women construct different perspectives of the boundaries of home. Men constructed the geography of home encompassing the local white and black communities in rural settings. Women, on the other hand, located home within local black rural enclaves. I observed that these constructs of boundaries reversed as men and women engaged in political activity and resistance in rural southern communities. For example, the political activism of African-American men in these rural communities was within local black rural enclaves. Men's actions remained bound within a black-defined hierarchy. The political activism of women bypassed constraints within local communities altogether, black and white. Politically active women recruited assistance and resources outside the confines of traditional structures of communication and interaction that define so many rural southern communities.

The culture and politics of shelter

Housing pressures in rural communities in the Carolinas have increased. Return migration contributes to existing housing pressures as people returning home join relatives in small wood-frame houses and trailers on family-owned land, or along dirt roads outside the center of rural crossroads. In an attempt to improve statistics on the "housing stock" in rural counties, local officials have condemned the bottom-worst housing, sheds without plumbing, electricity, or secure floor boards or lofts. Condemning inadequate housing further limits the housing stock; it does not improve availability. And it should not leave the impression that a majority of existing housing has both electricity and plumbing. Condemning housing only improves the statistics.

A detailed look at rural, low-income, subsidized housing available through FmHA Home Ownership Programs provides an assessment of the politics of shelter and political processes in these rural communities. The following description of FmHA housing policy includes analysis of local, land tenure patterns and existing housing; the goals of administrators, and an assessment of who the program serves; the efect of the resale market; and a description of the contrasts between FmHA housing designs and the needs and values of rural Afro-American clients.

Family compounds in rural Carolina communities are typically two to four acres of land on which small houses and mobile homes are grouped about fifty feet apart in a circle with a center courtyard. The courtyard provides an outdoor community center with a place for picnics, cookouts and large group gatherings, as well as a place to kill hogs for traditional barbecues at holidays and family reunions. Benches and trees pull people to the courtyard, especially during humid summers when folks welcome any outdoor breeze.

Existing houses on family compounds share a well that is sometimes across the road, a long walk during winter snows. Some of the houses have not been improved for over fifty years. Typical structures include shed- style houses with two rooms: a front room with half-loft, and a kitchen. The front room is full of beds, and is without windows. People enter through the kitchen, which has a wood-burning stove and perhaps a pump for water. From the kitchen you can look through to the living room or go up a ladder to a loft. Sleeping patterns vary depending on the age and sex of the children. In some families girls and babies sleep in the front room with the parents, and boys sleep in the loft. In others, older children sleep in the loft dormitory style. If the house is rented, rents for an unimproved house without electricity range from $20.00 to $50.00 a month. Fifty percent of the households in these counties earn less than $9,000 per year for families that average five children and three adults per household.

When families earning between the required $7,000 -$14,000 per year apply for a Farmer's Home Loan, they quickly learn that FmHA does not make loans to what appear to them to be "single heads of household." Such families, even with adequate and stable income, discover that they are considered to be high risk applicants. To cope with these requirements some families elect brokers, or family representatives, to front a loan for older family members. For example, if a young married couple with two jobs applies for the loan and gets a house built on family land, that FmHA house becomes the domain of the extended family, and the young couple are least likely to live in the new home. Older family members, grandparents, aunts and uncles are given the chance for a bit of luxury in their later years. Expecially if families build on or near land they own, they maintain the rental, or homeplace, which is less crowded due to the new housing. Architects who attempt to structure some design choice for occupants of new housing discover that the young couples "buying" the house consult continuously with others over small decisions, and learn later that the buyers are not going to be the main occupants of the house.

When "atypical" family groupings apply for an FmHA loan it is usually impossible to convince administrators to count the collective resources of extended family members, especially income gained from seasonal labor. Many rural jobs are seasonal, and it is difficult to document wages. But even when family members' wages are secure, group applicants face difficulty. In one instance a set of applicants were attempting to secure better housing for an elderly woman who had raised them. Her grown children and grandchildren had good jobs in the North. They wanted to help their "mama" get a decent house, and together had decided to co-sign for the loan. The local administrators decided that the paper work was too complicated, and even when the contractor intervened, the FmHA administrators would not spread out the liability.

The front room is full of beds, without windows. People enter through the kitchen which has a wood-burning stove and perhaps a pump. . .

In another example, two brothers and a sister wanted to help buy a home for their older sister, who was ill. They agreed to contribute their social security, and the earnings of one brother who had a steady job. They could document all their income. The administrator responded that "buying a house is like a business, not a social operation." He implied that they couldn't be counted to contribute their shares. The family concluded that, although the agency is designed to sell houses to people who have less money, the administrators expect poor people to behave the same way that people who have money behave. Administrators, however, see collective family commitments as a poor risk.

With respect to home design, the requirements of FmHA provide a fascinating example of the conflict between urban policies and the culture and needs of rural populations. Farmer's Home requires that each house have a septic tank, and that every house sit square on the lot, facing the street. Each house has to have a little driveway straight to it, like a suburban plot. Alternatives, like shared wells, are not allowed, and spatial arrangements preferred in the aesthetic of family compounds, are not respected. Farmer's Home wants each house to stand on its own for resale value. FmHA requires standard heating equipment, carpets on floors, small kitchens with washing machines installed in the kitchens, electric stoves, and one centralized bathroom. While money is allocated for gutters and downspouts, which are usually unnecessary for rural houses, there is no money for porches.

Rural people want a large kitchen that functions as a family room and cooking center. They want a pantry, because people save money by canning vegetables. They do not want the washing machine in the kitchen because cooking and washing laundry in the same room is considered unsanitary. Experience has taught them that old, second-hand washers overflow and are best located in a storage or utility room outside the house. Washers outside provide other advantages. People can remove their work clothes before entering the house. It is easier to hang wet laundry on outdoor clothes lines than to lug it outside, wet and heavy, from an indoor machine. Space outside is also desired for freezers.

People who live on dirt roads, and who often work the land or toil in wet poultry processing plants or in lint-filled mills, want floors that can be swept clean with a broom, not carpets. They prefer durable vinyl or pine floors. Just as washing machines are second-hand in rural households, so are vacuum cleaners. A decent vacuum cleaner is beyond the budget of most rural families, so the few families who do occupy FmHA homes line the carpets with heavy plastic runners that are cumbersome and impossible to clean.

The kitchens also pose problems. Rural cooking produces a tremendous amount of steam and grease. The standard hoods on stoves are not adequate, and people end up cooking in their yards over a wood-burning cookstove, or in a big black pot over an open fire. Women want a shed for an outdoor cookstove, or oversized hoods on indoor stoves. Neither of these requests are granted.

People want fewer and larger bedrooms—group bedrooms—with sleeping cubicles built in that can be removed during the day. One family requested a "Pullman train" type arrangement, with built-in loft beds that could go up against the wall to provide space for children to play and study during the day and early evening. Another family requested a closed-in porch they could use as a summer sleeping area that would also provide additional family space. FmHA refused these requests.

Bathrooms can be made flexible for large families. If a house has only one bathroom, a split bath can do triple duty where three people can make use of it at the same time. One house designed and built by an innovative architect turned the bathroom into three functional areas: the vanity, the comode, and the tub/shower. Doors separated each of these functions within the same space of a standard bathroom.

Another architect found that, contrary to the beliefs of local housing administrators, clients had a very clear understanding of their own housing needs, along with designs that could accommodate those needs. They also wanted to particpate in site layout, floor plans, and other design aspects of the process. But administrators, as one client told me, acted "as though they were doing us a favor."

FmHA allocations are not related to supply and demand but are manipulated with respect to private builders' cycles by controlling the flow of eligible applicants.

Based on interviews at the local community, county, and state level with administrators who manage FmHA housing programs, I drew several conclusions. Administrators function with an eye to the future resale market, the so-called "recapture market." They anticipate foreclosures, which will require marketing the houses, and choose to build in embellishments that will make the houses valuable to the recapture market. In anticipation of marketing the houses, they assume the posture of real estate brokers rather than social service agencies. They come to think like bank officers, even though the program is structured to serve low-income clients.

At the county level, considerable discretion is placed in the hands of the local administrators. Farmer's Home budgets so many houses per season, per county, and the locus of control is in the county office. If commercial housing production is down, and FmHA has an allocation fixed, FmHA functions to fill the gap, stimulating building in slow periods, and slowing down when the economy is moving. When commercial construction is high, low-income families do not get housing. From an outsider's vantage point, it looks like Farmer's Home is designed with the needs of private builders in mind. The FmHA agencies attempt to structure a reasonable profit for builders, and builders construct housing for a fixed price. FmHA allocations are not related to supply and demand, but are manipulated with respect to private builders' cycles by controlling the flow of eligible applicants. During slow building periods, the flow of applicants increases. During periods of high construction in the private sector, few FmHA applications are processed.

Guidelines and mandates for programs are directed from the state capital and from HUD. Local administrators complain about the state office creating impossible demands that they cannot follow and continue to serve the local county. According to local managers, the state office acts as a banker who is not pleased with productivity; they do not appear to be pushing housing. Local administrators feel tremendous pressures; risky decisions or excessive foreclosures look bad on their personal performance record. State officers look at performance. Any discretion given to county administrators is balanced by these pressures. The performance rate for each state is judged at the federal level. States are ranked by the number of houses built, by the number of delinquencies and foreclosures, and by whether agencies are within their budget.

Little is known by local managers as to whether more flexibility in client financing would increase or decrease foreclosures. The foreclosure rate appears to be tied to the economy, not to values and attitudes of local clients. Plant closings, bad crops, and summer heat that kills chickens are the major causes of new unemployment.

FmHA home owners learn that "ownership" is an illusion when they buy a home under Farmer's Home. This lesson is the hardest during a foreclosure. Home owners are given a short grace period—foreclosures take place within three to six months. If a foreclosure occurs the buyer receives no equity. Interest on these loans is as low as one percent, with increases on a sliding scale based on buyer's income. The buyer provides no down payment, and pays only on the principle. Typically, during a foreclosure, home owners loose their house and the land they once owned. They are likely to lose more than they gained if homes are built on family land. Low income buyers are treated with the standards of the private market at the front end, but they do not receive any equity at the other end.

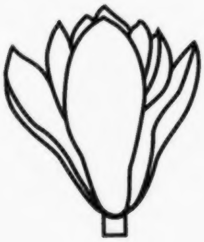
On the basis of personal experience, many low-income land-owners choose to buy mobile homes. If they cannot meet the payment they stand to lose the mobile home, but not the land. They argue that mobile homes are a more secure investment than Farmer's Home houses. Although the finance charges on mobile homes are outrageous, the buyer has more autonomy and less risk. Once mobile homes are paid for, people brick up the sides, encircling the home and creating a more permanent, more attractive structure. Serious safety hazards from fire or hurricanes are not a significant deterrent given the economic choices.

If families eligible for loans do not own land, they attempt to buy plots of land near family members. One family attempted to buy a small plot adjacent to the land where they had rented a cluster of sheds from a family they had worked for since the turn of the century. Mr. Keats, an elderly farmer and the remaining family member, was approached. He said he was worried "that their new house would look better than his." Mr. Keats spoke his views out loud, shaking his head, and offering that "they shouldn't be owning land," and that they would be living too close to him (although the space was next to their sheds). He also challenged the housing program itself, saying "people don't deserve goods they didn't work for, folks should know their place. The new house will be too big." However, Mr. Keats had a soft spot. He was struggling to set things right in his old age because, as he said, "I want to get into heaven." He knew the buyers had worked hard for him and his family over the generations and he allowed that he was "proud of them." He agreed to sell the land, thereby allocating a portion of the old homeplace to people who had lived there over the generations. However, the farmer is still in control because he employs the family in a county with an 18% unemployment rate.

Like the critique of HUD in urban areas (New York Times, 6/25/89, Section 4, p. 1), Farmer's Home subsidizes the real estate industry in rural areas. While FmHA goals are to provide decent shelter, nothing about the program speaks to the needs of rural, low-income residents. The bureaucracy, from Washington, D.C. to the local county officers, are culturally, psychologically, physically, and financially remote from the people they are trying to serve. Foreclosures on FmHA homes provide a ready-made stepping stone for not-so-low-income families who have funds to purchase the houses. Agents who collect the foreclosures get homes for resale at a bargain price and resell them to anyone they wish on the open market so that the house intended for a low-income buyer becomes reduced cost housing for the first-time, middle-income buyer who earns above $15,000.

Interdependent Development: Evidence and Policy

E. M. Bergman*



Economic development in counties of rural states such as Mississippi or Arkansas is an uneven process that reflects the unique distribution of initial advantages in each county *and* the interdependence of development among adjacent counties. This interdependence is seldom recognized in policy research or the policy measure taken to stimulate economic development.

If a ''potential'' formulation for independent variables is adopted for use in a model to predict growth of private nonfarm earnings of Arkansas Counties, one can test for the presence and effects of interdependence. Some factors shown to be responsible for earnings growth do indeed *spread their effects* across space (government income, entrepreneurial activity) while others yield polarized, *backwash effects* (high school and, perhaps, college graduates). Still other effects of interdependence indicate that high base levels of income from agriculture and retiree payments in neighboring counties act to reduce home county earnings growth, although transfer payments in neighboring counties boost growth. Further, home counties with large central city populations appear to grow faster than ones with substantial rural (or low density urban) populations.

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These findings offer another version of how factors thought to stimulate economic development have interdependent effects across space and through adjoining regions. Policy applications of this approach offer unique insights into the distribution and effectiveness claims of policy options in rural states such as Arkansas and further research progress may shed important light on the spread-backwash debate which remains stalled after the 1970s.

Introduction

The main policy question to be asked in this study is the following: what factors were present in Arkansas counties and those of neighboring states as the 1980 decade began that allow us to account for the subsequent growth of private, nonfarm earnings? Ordinary least-squares equations will be used to test these effects in Arkansas and counties in surrounding states.

Policy research into factors responsible for local economic growth is a complicated process, using evidence of mixed theoretical and policy significance. This paper reports on an approach that embodies an unusual form of evidence to reveal the effects of factors inside a county on its income growth, plus the additional effects of factors from *neighboring* counties on that growth. This research approach to nonmetropolitan economic development is useful because adjacent rural counties are heavily influenced by each other and by the far-reaching effects of metropolitan centers.

By examining the income growth of "home counties" (our unit of analysis) due to influences in both home and neighboring counties, we can learn more about the interdependencies of local economies that spread across space. This is a particularly important problem for rural economic development because rural economies lack the neat closure and relative insularity of metropolitan regions that tend to behave rather like mini-economies sprinkled independently across the national landscape. (At least this is the point argued by those who study metropolitan economies.) Put differently, do the factors (policy and theoretical) of a home county that affect income growth also show significant effects if measured in the neighboring counties as well? That is, if $F_H{}^{80} \rightarrow Y_H$, does $F_N{}^{80} \rightarrow Y_H$ in the same way?

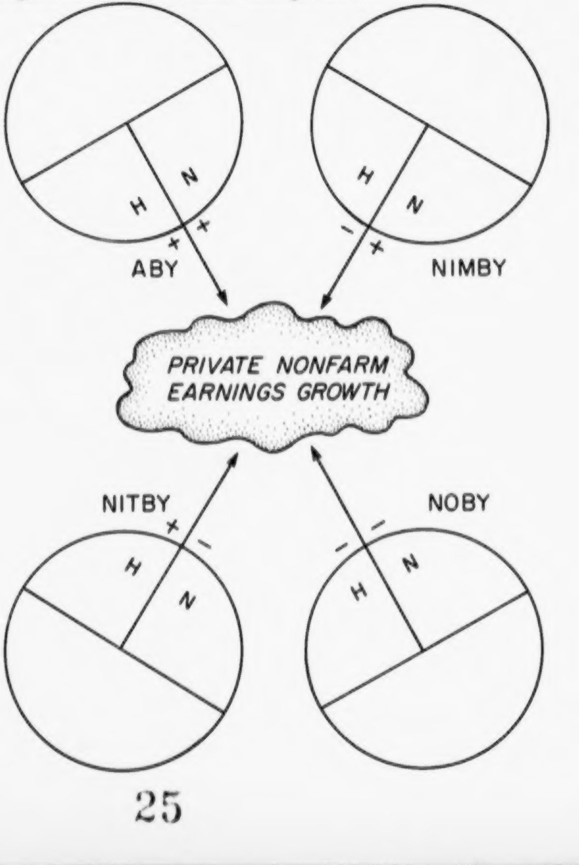
Evidence of Interdependence

Assuming that a given factor's effect on income growth is significant for both home and neighboring counties, there are four possible sign patterns of interest. The most familiar set of patterns reflects a homogeneous or balanced set of effects: a given factor in home and neighboring counties increases home county income (signs of both regression coefficients are positive) or decreases it (both signs negative). These patterns are consistent with development theories that posit the uniform "spread" effects of a development factor across adjoining territory.

The other set of patterns reveals opposite or unbalanced effects on income of a factor when measured in home and neighboring counties. In short, a given development factor in the home county might increase its income but that same factor in neighboring counties reduces home county income growth. (The mirror image can also result: a neighboring county factor increases home income growth while that same factor at home reduces growth.) For purposes of schematic convenience, sign patterns can be represented in the Figure 1. Each type of effect is associated with one circle and arrow on home county income growth shown here as a box. Myrdal, Hirschman and numerous others have emphasized the important polarizing effects of these "backwash" effects in developing regions, particularly those with primitive market structures (See particularly Gaile 1979a, 1979b for useful reviews of these concepts in the literature of regional development).

This paper uses these general concepts to detect interdependent development effects across counties in one of our nation's most rural regions. We can also use Figure 1 to identify and label some direct policy meanings of these sign patterns as well. Starting in the upper right-hand corner, any factor in a home county reduces home income that exhibits this sign pattern, but home income increases if the factor is present in neighboring

Figure 1. Private Nonfarm Earnings Growth



counties. We can appropriate the term NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) to summarize the typical policy viewpoint of this zero-sum type backwash effect.

The next clockwise effect—NOBY—applies to a factor that decreases home county income wherever it is found. No One's Back Yard is the obvious policy interpretation for this set of factors.

Next in order is NITBY: these factors increase home county income if high levels are measured *only* in the home county. They reduce home county income growth as levels of the factor rise in neighboring counties. Not In Their Back Yard is the policy equivalent of this classic backwash effect.

Finally, Anybody's Back Yard (ABY) is the least controversial policy effect because high levels of a factor in home and neighboring counties spread out to raise income growth in every county.

Neighbors, Access and Potential/Gravity Models[1]

The most promising way of describing the interdependence of neighboring economic activity in space is to measure the spatial access each county's economy has to all others. Many types of models have been developed that focus on the spatial flow of activities (such as the flow of goods and services, ideas and information, and people), each of which permit a careful consideration of different local and national effects. We focus on potential models as a means of capturing effects of these spatial flows. In order to understand the logical development of potential models, we also discuss their precursor, gravity models. Gravity models focus on the observed patterns of economic flows between areas, and consider the aggregate volume of interaction to be a function of economic activity within areas and the distance between them. Potential models have a narrower spatial focus; they are concerned with the opportunities for activity flows affecting one area that originate in all other areas, where the effect diminishes with distance or accessibility.

Gravity models

The modern development of gravity models has been traced to J.W. Stewart's work of the early 1940s. As an astronomer at Princeton, Stewart observed that the majority of students attending the University came from the local region, while fewer students came from farther distances. He likened this pattern of human interaction to Newton's theory of planetary gravitation which holds that the force between two planets is directly related to the mass of the planets and inversely related to the distance between the two planets. If one substitutes county locations for planets, then this analogy yields a measure of "demographic gravitation" that assumes that the volume of interaction between two locations is directly related to their population size (akin to the masses of the planets), and inversely related to the distance between them.

One determinant of the volume of interaction is the movement of individuals within each location. Here we assume that, on average, patterns of interaction are the same for all individuals, at all locations. If individuals' interactions are uniform, then the volume of interaction in a location is assumed to depend solely on its total population. A location with a large population, for example, would generally have a greater pool of commuters, shoppers, production facilities, etc. that permits more frequent interactions than a location with a smaller population.

The inverse relationship between the level of interaction and the distance between two locations simply reflects the difficulty of movement associated with far distances. This difficulty of movement, or "frictional effect," reflects higher transportation costs, longer travel times, and generally, less available information about the possibility of interaction in the other location. Because of this frictional effect, the spatial interaction between two locations frequently exhibits a distance decay pattern: there is a higher volume of interaction over short distances and a considerably lower volume of interaction over long distances.

Potential models

Potential models consider the same spatial flows of activity, although their focus is on the activity between each particular location taken one at a time and all other locations, rather than the aggregate interaction among all locations in the gravity model. For example, in developing a potential model for use in this study, our concern is with the interaction between a single (home) Arkansas county and all other (neighboring) counties in the study area. Measures of potential then reflect the relative position, or accessibility, of each county *vis a vis* all other counties under study.

The principal virtue of a potential model is that the economic performance of a county can be evaluated in terms of its own characteristics, and by its *interdependent position* with respect to other counties and their characteristics. A firm in one county, for example, offers employment opportunities not only to residents in that county but also to residents in nearby counties. A firm's location decision, on the other hand, will be guided not only by the demand it expects from a single county but also by the demand it expects from an entire region. However, most of these influences across county borders are hampered by "distance friction," i.e. the money, time, and effort needed by economic actors to overcome the distances between counties. As a result, we expect counties to have an impact on other nearby counties, although this effect diminishes as the distance between those counties increases.

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[1] Some of the discussion here is derived from an earlier research report (Weist and Bergman, 1988).

Potential models have been used to analyze patterns of population, income, migration, transportation, communication, and industrial location. Since the major effect of transportation systems is to allow and ease interaction between activities at different locations, this study focuses on this interaction and its influence on the Arkansas economy. We are therefore interested in potential models as a means of characterizing the effect that distance has on the economic characteristics of counties. In other words, *we develop potential models to calculate the explanatory variables that are subsequently used in a statistical model that, together with other policy variables (education, etc.), explain change in regional income levels.*

Estimation of County Potentials

The estimation of county potentials entails four basic steps: the definition of the area of study; the choice of a "mass" term; the definition of the center for mass, or "centroid"; and the calculation of a distance decay function.

Definition of the area of study

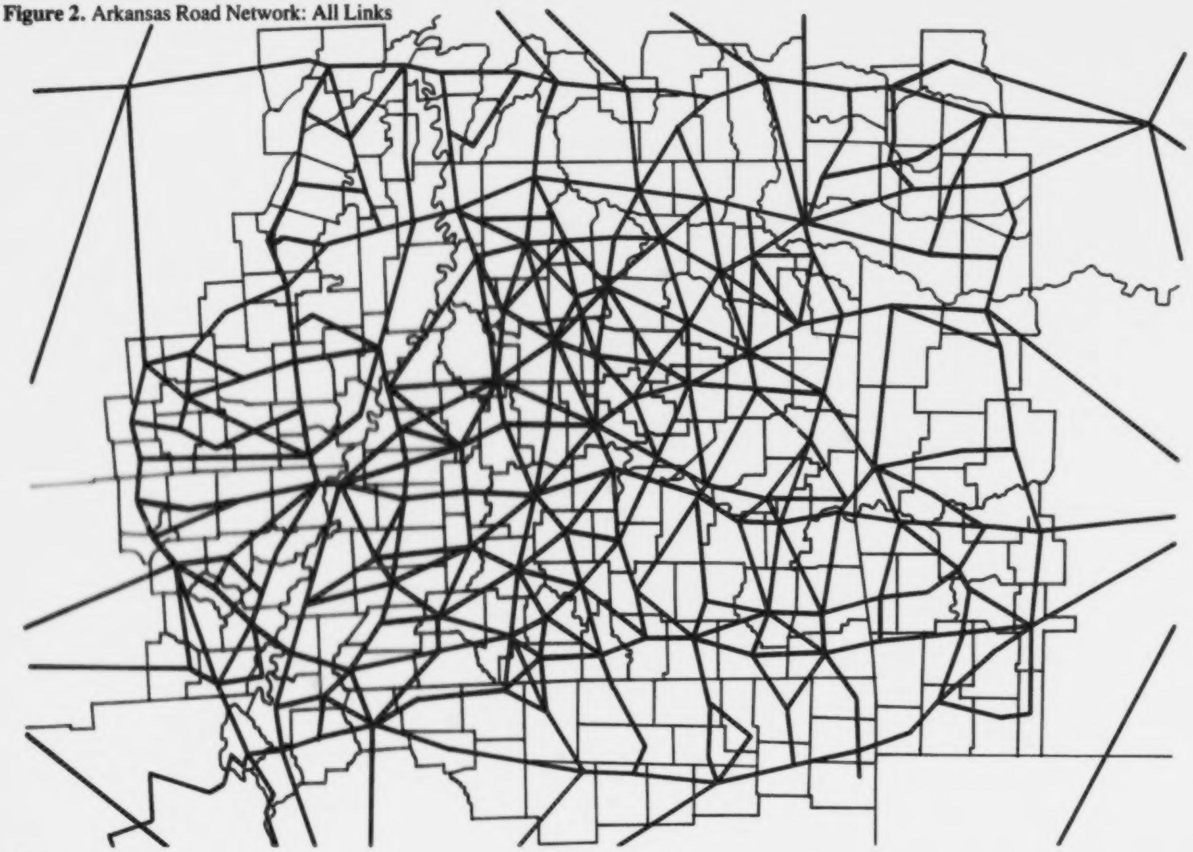
Our potential model is based on observations from 251 spatial units. A large proportion of these spatial units (201 units) reflect the interactions within the State of Arkansas and between it and its surrounding states. These 201 units are composed of all of the counties in Arkansas (75 counties), and an additional 126 counties from the six surrounding states (Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri) that connect Arkansas with its region. To account for national influences on potential interactions, we also include 50 other spatial units, comprised of 3 units for the state of Texas, and 47 units for the remaining continental states and the District of Columbia.

Counties were chosen as the unit of analysis for Arkansas and its surrounding states. Counties are a natural choice as a spatial unit because they are relatively homogeneous in terms of patterns of interaction, they are points of origin for important policy measures (e.g. elementary and secondary education), and they are the smallest unit of analysis with current and readily available data.

"Mass terms," "Centroids," "Linkages," and "Distance decay:" A Primer

The "mass" term in the potential model reflects the magnitude of local factors responsible for economic interaction. We use several economic factors or characteristics of spatial units as alternative measures of the probable base for economic interaction (or interde-

Figure 2. Arkansas Road Network: All Links



pendent development). These characteristics include measures of population, employment, income, and economic structure.

A primary concern in developing a potential model is incorporating measures of distance between our units of analysis (counties and states). The distance between counties will vary depending on where in each county we measure distance. In order to develop the potential model, it is necessary to center the "mass" of the county, or "centroid," in one particular location. A single location in each county greatly facilitates the measurement of distances between counties. One city was chosen to represent the centroid of each of the 251 counties and states. For example, Little Rock was chosen to represent the centroid of Pulasko County. These cities were chosen because of their importance in terms of population or economic activity, or because they contained important nodes in the road network.

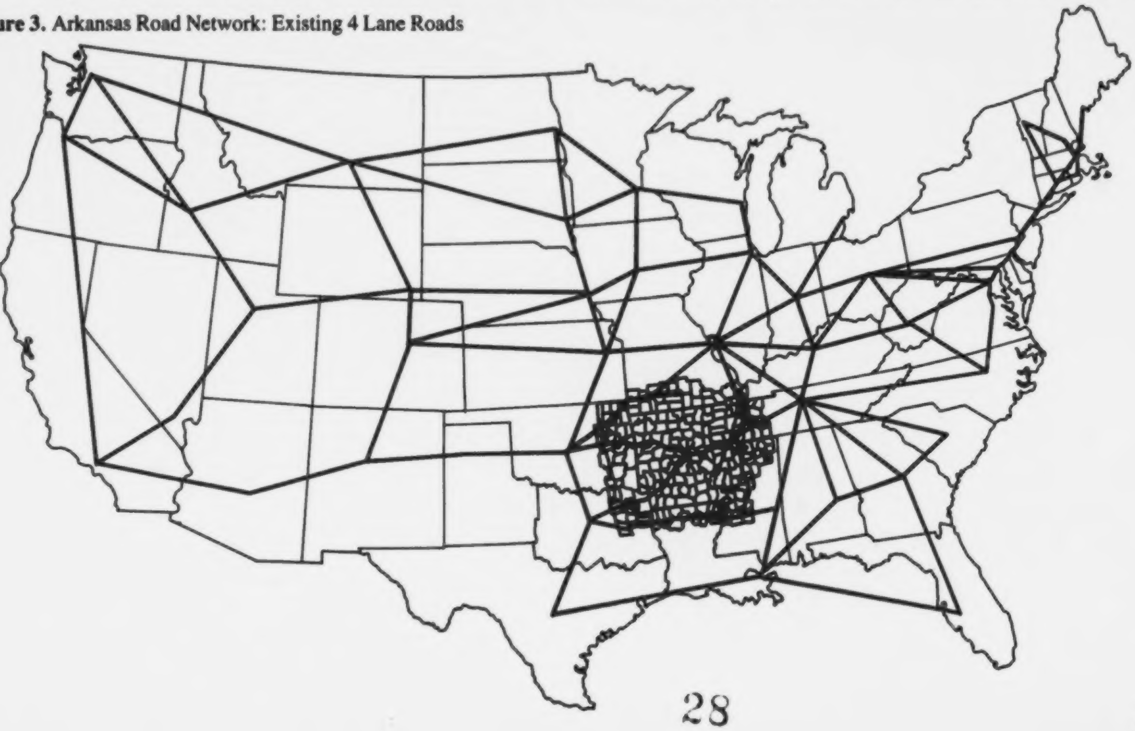
Our distance measures are based on the travel time between each centroid, which depends on the distance along roads linking each centroid, the type of road connecting the centroids, and other factors affecting the expected travel time between centroids. The distance between adjacent nodes is measured by the existing road network, or "links" between each centroid. With these data on centroids and "links," we have an intricate understanding of the distance between counties. (See Figures 2 and 3).

Potentials take full account of the fact that the volume of interaction is likely to be inversely related to the distance between counties. It is much more likely when shopping, for example, for Arkansas residents to travel within their county of residence, and perhaps to other nearby counties in the State, than it is for them to travel long distances or to locations outside of the State (unless they live in a county on the State's border). The calculation of a distance decay function is simply a mathematical representation of these likelihoods.

We calculate a distance decay function for two types of economic activity: the interactions of individuals (e.g. commuting to work, shopping, pursuing recreational activities, etc.) and the interactions arising from the shipment of goods. Our distance decay function tells us that, on average, the volume of interaction for individuals will be concentrated in distances of 20 miles or less, and that there will be no interaction between locations more than 75 miles apart. For goods shipments, our distance decay function tells us that most goods will be shipped 200 miles or less, and that no goods will be shipped more than 1500 miles. (See Appendix for further details).

We used distance data between the 251 cities as a basis for estimating the three types of potentials. To gain an understanding of how potential measures are related to distances, we present maps of potentials for college graduates and agricultural income. Figure 4 simply shows the relative distribution of college graduates by county across Arkansas; college graduates are concentrated in the center of the State, especially in Little Rock. Figure 5 shows the relative distribution of college graduates in surrounding states; notice that these graduates are concentrated in Memphis, Tennessee, which is near the Arkansas border. From these original concentrations, potentials for all 251 counties and

Figure 3. Arkansas Road Network: Existing 4 Lane Roads



states are calculated to estimate effects on income in Arkansas.

Figure 6 presents the distribution of agricultural income by county in Arkansas. Agricultural income is distributed much more uniformly than college graduates, although agricultural income is concentrated along the northwestern edge of the State. Because agricultural income is based on the export shipment of agricultural products, we used the distance decay function for shipments, which declines to zero at distances more than 1500 miles apart.

Simulating Differences in Regional Income

Our concern in this study is to simulate how regional economic development is affected by the baseline economic characteristics and particular state policies, while recognizing that development hinges on the volume of interaction between counties afforded by the transportation system. We measure economic development by growth of private non-farm proprietors' income. Our income data, which are obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, are for counties in 1979 and 1986.

Policy and theoretical factors

Differences in a county's private non-farm income growth may be attributable to many economic factors, some of which are embedded in the current level and type of county populations. Our model includes a number of population characteristics: central city population; urban population; rural population. These are useful surrogates for various degrees of urbanization economies, i.e. central city (highest) down through the urban and rural settlement patterns of counties in this region; when interpreted as a pattern, these types of settlement provide qualitative information about which local economies are conducive to economic growth.

The sectoral composition of the local economy may also be an important determinant of regional income. We included measures of the concentrations of one-digit industry sectors in our model; these measure whether an area had an above-average concentration of a particular industry or not. Also included is measure of whether counties have good access to the interstate highway system or not.

We focus primarily on baseline levels (1980) of the outputs of three state policies important to rural development: higher education, secondary education and policies that encourage proprietors and entrepreneurial development. The exceptional attention given recently to these factors in numerous research studies and in

Figure 4. College Graduates 1980

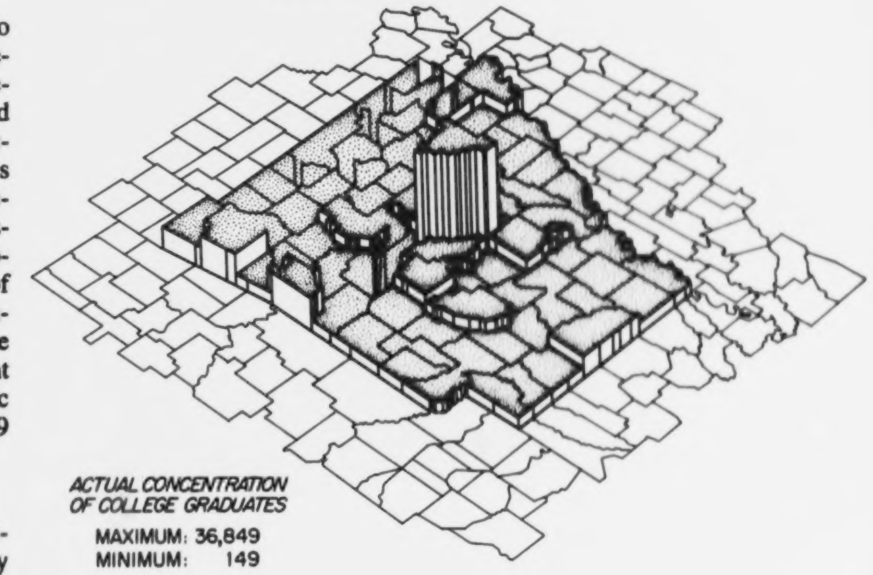
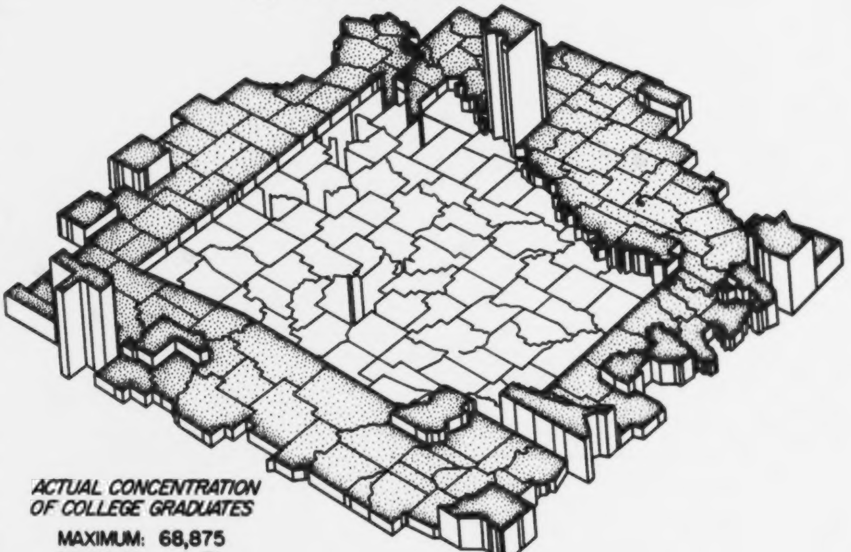


Figure 5. College Graduates 1980

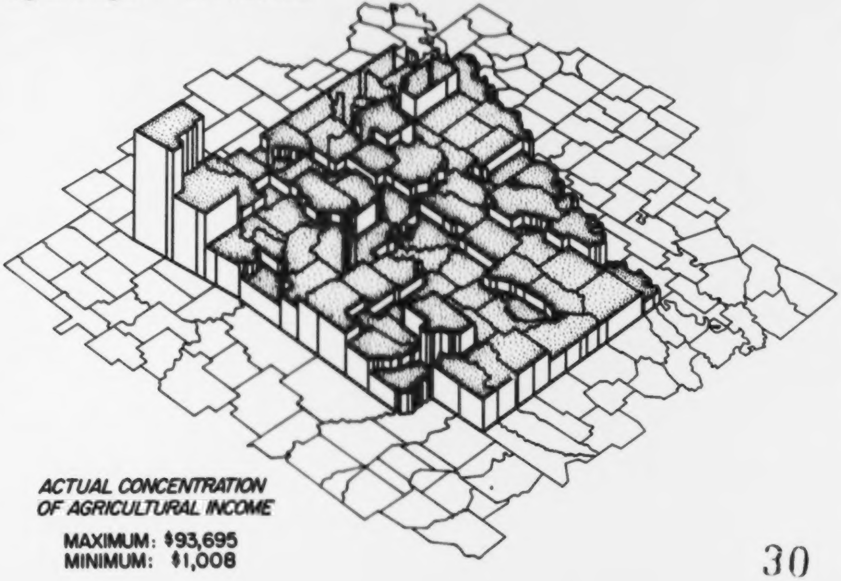


policy initiatives of the region argue strongly for their inclusion. As a measure of educational output, we include the number of individuals that graduated from high school as their highest level of completed education, and the number of individuals with four or more years of college as their highest level of completed education. We use the number of nonfarm proprietors as a measure of entrepreneurs and self-employment. Finally, a county's growth of private, nonfarm earnings is dependent upon those other types of exogenously driven income: farm, government, retirement and transfers. These are more or less susceptible to broader policies at state and federal levels and are important to include for that very reason.

Impact estimations: Procedures and results

To isolate the effects of each explanatory variable, we use multiple regression analysis in our impact estimation procedure.[2] The dependent variable is 1979-86 growth of private nonfarm income, measured in thousands of dollars. The explanatory variables used are those mentioned above, some of which are weighted by their potential interaction over various distances.

Figure 6. Agricultural Income 1980



This weighting produces two possible versions of each explanatory variable: a "home" effect variable, which reflects the impact of a county's variable on itself, and a "neighbor" effect variable, which measures the home county growth effect of this variable induced by other surrounding counties along the entire highway system. This allows us to ask questions that consider the spatial impact of a change in state policy. For example, what would the expected impact on a county's income growth be of increasing the number of high school graduates? It also allows us to evaluate the pattern of effects and interdependent development tendencies described as NIMBY, NOBY, NITBY and ABY.

The differences between home effects and neighbor effects for each variable can be observed by examining the coefficient estimates from the model. Estimates reported for the neighbors reflect the average distance between counties on an *aggregated* level. The interdependent effects of some variable in one particular county on another will depend on the *distance between these two counties*. If the counties are very far apart (i.e. farther than 75 miles, in most cases) then these neighborhood potentials will be weighted by zero to reflect the distance decay function for individual interactions. In the following discussion of home versus neighboring effects, we will refer to a "representative" county in which a hypothetical change in level of policy or explanatory variables might be said to have an "average" impact.

Principal Findings

The findings are arrayed in Table 1: Panel A summarizes the coefficients for all variables tested and Panel B includes only those variables which remained significant in an edited model. Several points deserve comment at the outset. First, the model fit is quite good while coefficients of variables included in both models retain their signs and orders of magnitude. The list of variables is further grouped: the first major group includes dummy variables for industry concentration and interstate highway access (/D). The second group includes *home* county variables and the third group lists the same *neighboring* county variables. These two are further subdivided into variable types where the dependent variable (earnings growth in $) responds to a unit change in people (/C) or dollars (/$) associated with the independent variable. As examples, EPRNF79 in Panel B indicates that one additional nonfarm entrepreneur (a unit change) in the average home county would have raised its 1979-86 income growth by 37,364 dollars, while one additional dollar of income from government sources in neighboring counties (BSGOV) would raise home income by slightly more that one cent. Table 2 defines the variables retained in the edited model (Panel B, Table 1).

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[2] The model estimates are based on the 201 counties in Arkansas and the six surrounding states. The model specification is the result of a long search process in which various specifications and variable combinations were considered. Throughout the many variants of the model that were estimated, we obtained similar results. This finding gives us some confidence in the qualitative results of the model. Our statistical modeling procedure included only those variables that had the greatest impact on explaining differences in private nonfarm income. As a result, home and neighboring county versions of the explanatory variables were not included for all variables. The results of this estimation procedure are reported in Table 1. All variables are significantly different from zero, with 90 percent certainty, while most variables are significant at the 99 percent level. The overall performance of the model is very good. The corrected R is 0.98, indicating that nearly all the variance in regional income growth can be explained by these variables. The model results support our contention that the effects of home and neighboring explanatory variables may differ for a county and its surrounding areas.

When coefficients in Table 1 are converted to the patterns suggested earlier as tests of interdependent development, the results reveal both spread and backwash effects.

Spread effects (ABY) are clearly evident in the case of income received from government sources, although the effects are considerably stronger for home counties (76 cents) thereby indicating strong attenuation of income received in neighboring counties (11 cents). Proprietors in home and neighboring counties also spread beneficial growth effects, but in this case the unit effect accumulates in neighboring counties to yield even more growth (97,310 dollars), perhaps an entrepreneurial culture boosts earnings growth more than the effect of a home county's own proprietors (37,364 dollars). Although their relative effects differ, development in a representative county tends to spread as levels of government income or proprietors rise.[3] This type of spatial interdependence is usually assumed (or ignored) and seldom demonstrated with empirical evidence.

Backwash effects account for a majority of important variables. The NITBY version is particularly interesting because it captures uneven effects of an educated labor force. That is, every additional high school graduate in a home county *boosts* its income growth by 17,433 dollars whereas each additional graduate of neighboring counties within commuting range *depresses home county income* by 25,410 dollars. Apart from the potent effects on earnings growth produced by education, one policy interpretation suggests highly specific effects. This means that a better educated labor

TABLE 1. Dependent Variable INCDIF

	PANEL A					PANEL B				
		DF	R-square	F	Prob>F		DF	R-square	F	Prob>F
	Regression	25	0.98993014	688.14	0.0001	Regression	13	0.98916214	1312.87	0.0001
	Error	175				Error	187			
	Total	200				Total	200			
	Variable		Parameter Estimate	F	Prob>F	Variable		Parameter Estimate	F	Prob>F
	INTERCEP		−1327.70693978	0.00	0.9600	INTERCEP		−4532.89422061	0.04	0.8476
DUMMIES	DAGRS		−9505.48416866/D	1.71	0.1933					
	DCON		−10106.69892350/D	2.64	0.1063					
	DSER		−32697.16776495/D	2.25	0.1351					
	SYSHI		7886.18236312/D	1.58	0.2102					
	SYSLD		3833.04433557/D	0.15	0.6995					
HOME	EPRNF79		24.48053114/C	7.70	0.0061	EPRNF79		37.36364882/C	58.81	0.0001
	HIGHSL		18.19263027/C	27.57	0.0001	HIGHSL		17.44345372/C	57.07	0.0001
	COLLEGE		6.19140099/C	1.65	0.2001					
	CENTRAL		−0.87019454/C	0.51	0.4775	CENTRAL		−0.97119447/C	4.45	0.0363
	NOCENTR		−2.53428280/C	4.02	0.0465	NOCENTR		−2.52429090/C	20.32	0.0001
	NONURB		−1.98101916/C	3.89	0.0502	NONURB		−2.45090207/C	18.62	0.0001
	AGRI		0.15465053/$	0.11	0.7375					
	RETIR		0.30173040/$	0.19	0.6634					
	TRANSFER		−1.44406705/$	0.41	0.5213					
	IGOV79		0.54573821/$	7.38	0.0072	IGOV79		0.76457962/$	31.41	0.0001
NEIGHBOR	PSEPRNF		108.79481190/C	22.23	0.0001	PSEPRNF		97.31017763/C	24.55	0.0001
	PSHIGHSL		−39.49710556/C	6.23	0.0135	PSHIGHSL		−25.41062859/C	19.56	0.0001
	PSCOLLG		−42.57742840/C	5.29	0.0226	PSCOLLG		−17.19375214/C	6.78	0.0099
	PSCENTR		6.37964786/C	1.24	0.2676					
	PSNCENTR		4.00141512/C	0.44	0.5068					
	PSNONURB		5.04363097/C	1.29	0.2583					
	PSAGRI		−0.04522589/$	1.98	0.1616	PSAGRI		−0.06512229/$	5.34	0.0220
	PSRETIR		−4.31618754/$	5.59	0.0192	PSRETIR		−3.23718695/$	4.26	0.0405
	PSTRANSF		24.07688052/$	7.43	0.0071	PSTRANSF		27.10756630/$	29.22	0.0001
	PSGOV		0.00738129/$	1.18	0.2791	PSGOV		0.01110923/$	3.31	0.0704

Note
/$ per dollar;/C per capita;/D per 0/1 Dummy

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[3] No evidence of systematic loss effects was revealed despite the negative signs for central city, urban and rural populations. As discussed in a subsequent section on NIMBY effects, these signs are essentially "scaling" factors tht adjust the expected earnings growth downward due to systematic overestimates from the effects of other included variables.

force in counties near large labor markets won't necessarily raise earnings generated locally, but that education in rural counties outside metropolitan commutershed may raise local levels of earned incomes. Analoguous findings of negative income growth effects of college education in nearby counties add further support for this interpretation, although local college graduates appear to have no significant effect on their home county's earnings growth, perhaps due to their even greater tendency to commute. States such as Arkansas might wish to consider targeting their most remote, rural yet promising counties when targeting expenditures for elementary and secondary education. Not In Their Backyard Yard (NITBY) arguments also apply with lesser force to retiree income and agricultural income received in *neighboring counties*. Put differently, home counties surrounded by neighbors that host more retirees and agriculture grow more slowly than otherwise expected. Lateral integration of adjacent economies is apparently harmed as income from external remittance or commodity agriculture deprive neighbors of potential growth spin-offs.

NIMBY patterns are at best suggestive because their variables lack the symmetry of significant home and neighboring county effects. One set of negative effects in a home county shows the uniformly negative influence of every type of settlement pattern: central cities, other urban, and rural populations all appear to depress earnings growth but in fact they serve as "scaling" factors that adjust growth effects in alternate settlements. The "penalty" associated with the coefficient for central city populations is less than half that of the others, thereby revealing the agglomeration advantages enjoyed by concentrated urban centers. Another unbalanced NIMBY effect results from income received as transfer payments in neighboring counties. Presumably, these funds leak out to nearby market centers but do not significantly stimulate (or retard) growth of earnings in the home county.

Table 2: Variable Names and Definitions (Edited Model)

	Name	Distance Decay	Definition of Variables
1.	INTERCEP	—	Intercept
2.	EPRNF	—	Number of non-farm Proprietors, 1979
3.	HIGHSL	—	People older than 25 with High School as highest Education (High School Graduates), 1980
4.	CENTRAL	—	Central Cities Population, 1980
5.	NOCENTR	—	Urban Population (non-Central City), 1980
6.	NONURB	—	Rural Population, 1980
7.	IGOV79	—	Income from Government Services, 1979
8.	PSEPRNF	HH Trips	Potential of # of nonfarm Proprietors, 1979
9.	PSHIGHSL	HH Trips	Potential of High School Graduates, 1980
10.	PSCOLLG	HH Trips	Potential of College Graduates, 1980
11.	PSAGRI	Shipm.	Potential of Agricultural Income, 1979
12.	PSRETIR	HH Trips	Potential of Retirement Transfer, 1979
13.	PSTRANSF	HH Trips	Potential of Social Transfers, 1979
14.	PSGOV	Shipm.	Potential of Income from Government, 1979

Concluding Caveats

As the product of a simulation model designed for Arkansas, the present findings are necessarily limited in terms of application. That is, if all remaining technical difficulties are eliminated one must still remain cautious regarding both policy and theoretical inferences. At the policy level, we can only adopt the "what if" logic that simulation models allow. We are really asking the *historical* question: *what* income growth would you have expected in Arkansas *if* some policy outcome in the representative county (either home or neighboring) was marginally higher than its observed level in 1980? To the degree the model successfully captures most of the processes at work between 1980 and 1986, our confidence in any answer to the "what if" formulation drops off rapidly as development is projected further into the future. *The very processes of economic development are intended to change the relationships revealed in this simulation model*. Therefore, one should apply these findings very cautiously to important policy-making and public expenditure decisions. It is, however, worth noting that even with such cautions, the information available from the model appears to be far superior to that available from other case-study methods, trend analysis or anecdotal sources that are typically relied upon.

On the question of spread-backwash or polarized-decentralized development tendencies, the model supplies tantalizing but similarly limited evidence. The problem here is one of specifying properly the theoretically defined variables (not merely some of their policy analogs) and examining a representative body of evidence (not simply Arkansas counties and nearest neighbors).

As many other researchers who have studied spatial development well know, there are always present a mixture of spread or backwash effects operating simultaneously in every region. The mixture itself may differ markedly in Arkansas versus Minnesota, for example, due to widely differing levels of general development, degrees of market failure, unique institutional impediments or specific cultural/regional practices. And, of course, further development in Arkansas will likely change the way in which rural and urban counties become further interdependent. Accordingly, this type model should be replicated for several types of regions to test for stability of parameters that indicate the presence of spread or backwash effects.

Careful specification of a sound theoretical model would allow greater insight into the underlying development processes at work. Some of the variables introduced in this study to examine policy effects may require further disentangling and tighter definition. Otherwise, the direction of causation may remain unclear. The possibilities for designing a well-specified explanatory model are definitely improved with the provisional findings available here and work is now progressing in that direction.

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Technical Appendix

Gunther Maier* and Edward Bergman**

Basic Structure of the Model

Since the major effect of highways is to allow and ease interaction between activities located at different places, this study focuses on this interaction and its influence on the economy. As a result, the econometric model we estimate and use to predict the effects of policies explicitly accounts for these interactions between counties.

The basic premise of the model is that the economic performance of a county is influenced not only by its own characteristics, but also by its position with respect to other counties and their characteristics. A firm in one county, for example, offers employment opportunities not only to residents in that county but also to residents in nearby counties. A firm's location decision, on the other hand, will be guided not only by the demand it expects from a single county but also from the demand it expects from an entire region.

In regional economics, "potentials" have proven to be a useful concept for capturing such spatial relationships. A potential is a weighted sum of the regional characteristics of one subregional area. It represents the spatial equivalent of a "present value." The potential for a specific variable (X) for county i is defined as

$$Pot_i = d_j X_i f(d_{ij})$$

where X is some economic characteristic the potential of which is to be calculated (often referred to as a "mass term"), d_{ij} is the distance between spatial unit i and spatial unit j, and f denotes a function of distance ("distance decay function"). The index j in the summation runs over all spatial units in the system. The distance decay function is non-negative and decreases with distance.

In regional economics, however, it is well known that the development process does not necessarily lead to a spread of benefits to nearby areas ("spread effect") but often extracts resources or displaces growth possibilities from these areas, thus hampering their economic development ("backwash effect"). In its standard version the potential formula assumes only "spread effects," but not "backwash effects."

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We have adapted the potential concept to correct this deficiency:

> we exclude the contribution of the respective county itself from each potential, and—if it is not a component of the dependent variable—use it as a separate variable ("self effect") in the estimation. "Spread" versus "Backwash" effects can then be distinguished and policymaking be fine-tuned more effectively.

Data

The study uses data from three different sources:

- 1986 income data, published by Bureau of Economic Analysis;
- 1980 population data, from the U.S. Census Department;
- information about the existing highway network and proposed improvements provided by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD).

Income

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis publishes detailed statistics on income and employment—among others—by counties. The most recent year for which this information is available is 1986. Our study uses 1986 as the base year in order to provide the most up-to-date information.

The following components of income are used in the study;

Table 1: Components of Income

- Farm income
- Non-farm income
  - Non-farm proprietors' income
  - Non-farm wage and salary income
    - Private non-farm wage and salary income
      - Agricultural services, forestry, fish and wildlife, and others
      - Mining
      - Construction
      - Manufacturing
      - Transportation and public utilities
      - Wholesale trade
      - Retail trade
      - Finance, insurance, and real estate
      - Services
      - Government and government enterprises
- Retirement transfers
- Other transfers
  - Income maintenance
  - Unemployment insurance

For example, total income is composed of farm and non-farm income, and transfer payments; while non-farm proprietors' income and non-farm wage and salary income make up non-farm income. The dependent variable of the model we estimate—private non-farm income—is defined as the sum of private non-farm wage and salary income, and non-farm proprietors' income.

One problem with using income by industry at the county level is that in numerous cases too few firms of one industry exist in a specific county and the corresponding income data are suppressed for confidentiality reasons. However, BEA provides complete information on aggregates that may be used to derive estimates of the missing values.

The procedure used to estimate missing values is similar to the RAS-technique frequently applied in Input-Output-Analysis (see e.g. Miller, Blair, 1985). Denote as Y_{ij} private non-farm wage and salary income in sector j of county i. Then total private non-farm wage and salary income in county i can be written as

$$Y_i = \Sigma_j Y_{ij}$$

and private non-farm wage and salary income in industry j in the respective state as

$$Y_j = \Sigma_i Y_{ij}$$

For each state, this information can be arranged in a matrix with row and column sums in the following way:

$$\begin{array}{c|c|c} & & \Sigma \\ \hline & Y_{ij} & Y_i \\ \hline \Sigma & Y_j & \end{array}$$

The procedure for estimating the missing elements among the Yij's applies the following steps:

1) Subtract the non-missing elements from the respective row- and column-sum and set the element itself equal to zero. This yields the row- and column-sums of all missing elements. Call them Z_i and Z_j respectively.
2) Set all the missing elements among the Y_{ij}'s to a positive value, say 1. Let us call all these values Z_{ij}.
3) Derive the first round updates of Z_{ij} by applying the following formula

   $$Z^1_{ij} = Z_{ij} * (Zi/\Sigma_j Z_{ij})$$

   This gives updated values with row sums equal to Z_i.
4) Apply the same procedure to columns, i.e. use

   $$Z^2_{ij} = Z^1_{ij} * (Zj/\Sigma_i Z_{ij})$$

   This adjusts the matrix to the column sums but distorts the row sums.
5) Repeat steps 3 and 4 until the matrix replicates the row and column sums sufficiently well. The procedure was stopped when the mean absolute deviation was below 1.

This procedure gives a matrix of estimates for all the missing values which can be substituted into the original matrix.

Population

We obtained data from the 1980 Census of Population for the following population characteristics:

- Central city population;
- Urban population;
- Rural population;
- Black population;
- Population older than 25 that completed high school;
- Population older than 25 that completed 4 or more years of college.

These data were used without adjustment.

Highway Information

Our highway information consists of various layers and was compiled in numerous steps.

In the first step, we chose 201 counties (the 75 counties of Arkansas and 126 counties from the six surrounding states) as basic spatial units for our analysis. The residual counties in the six adjacent states were aggregated to one "region" for each state (except for those counties in Texas, which were aggregated to three regions). A similar process of aggregation was performed for the counties in the remaining 42 states of the continental U.S. This aggregation procedure yielded a group of fifty additional spatial units.

For each of these 251 spatial units we chose one city to represent that respective unit. These cities were chosen because they are either important centers of population and economic activity or important nodes in the road network. A list of all of the 251 spatial units and their representative cities ("nodes") can be found in Appendix 1.

In the second step the existing road network was replicated by linking adjacent nodes. This yields a list of 496 connections ("links") which build up a network covering all of the continental United States. Of course, this network is much finer and much more accurate in Arkansas and surrounding states.

Information about distances and travel times along each of the links in Arkansas and the counties in the surrounding states was provided by the AHTD. The respective information about the links outside of this area was compiled from a travel map (Rand McNally Road Atlas, 1988 Edition).

In addition to distance and time we also compiled information about whether or not each link is served by a four-lane road. This allows us to distinguish between two different levels of road quality and to model the effects of quality increases.

In the third step we used a "Shortest Path" Computer Program to search for the shortest route between each of the 251 nodes in the system. This yields a 251x251 matrix of travel times between each pair of nodes in our system.

Besides the distance[1] matrix using the full set of links, we also calculated a distance matrix which only takes into account the four-lane system (distances to and from nodes not on the four-lane system are set to infinity).

In addition to the status quo information, the AHTD also provided information about distances and travel times on links which are planned to be improved for the two time periods "before 1995" and "after 1995." This allows the computation of matrices of travel time along the improved road network—again for the full as well as the four-lane system.

These data were transformed into the following explanatory variables, which were used in the estimation of the model. They belong to three categories:

Intercept and dummy variables. Besides the standard INTERCEPT of regression analysis, we used a number of dummy variables. They are either zero or one and have the effect of shifting the whole regression equation. SYSHI is one, if the county has good access to the interstate highway system, zero otherwise. We characterized the county's industry mix by a set of dummy variables, which were set to one if the county had an above-average income share from a particular industry. A dummy variable was included for each industry listed in Table 1. This (somewhat) indirect way of accounting for the industry mix was used to avoid econometric problems associated with including a subcomponent of the dependent variable on the right hand side of the equation.

Population variables. For each population characteristic (central city population, urban population, rural population, black population, population older than 25 with high school completed, and population older than 25 with 4 or more years of college completed) we used the self-effect variable and both potentials. In addition the "number of non-farm proprietors in 1986" (self-effect and both potentials) was used from the BEA data set to account for the fact that proprietors' income is included in the dependent variable, and to represent an important policy variable.

Income variables. This group encompasses all income components not included in the dependent variable, i.e. government, farm, retirement, and transfer income. The self effects and both potentials of these variables enter the estimation procedure. We only included the two potentials for non-farm proprietors income; the self-effect was dropped to avoid econometric problems arising from the use of a subcomponent of the dependent variable on the right hand side of the equation.

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[1] Distance is measured in terms of travel time.

Only a subset of these variables enters the final specification of the model.

Calculating Potentials

A problem associated with using potentials is the derivation of the distance decay function. Ideally in a modeling context, one would derive this function through the estimation process simultaneously with the parameters of the model (see e.g. Broecker, 1984). This approach, however, leads to a highly complex estimation procedure for which no standard software is available. Also this approach requires that the distance decay function be specified in parametric form with one or two parameters left to be estimated.

We chose a more traditional approach in deriving the distance decay function for the potentials. Since the primary reasons for using potentials are related on the one hand to commuting and shopping trip patterns, and on the other to shipments of products, we use information that is available about these interactions.

The 1977 Commodity Transportation Survey (CTS), which is a component of the 1977 Census of Transportation "provides statistics on the volume and characteristics of commodity shipments by manufacturing establishments in the U.S. The survey is based on shipping data obtained from a stratified probability sample of 19,500 manufacturing establishments selected from the 1977 Census of Manufactures universe of manufacturing establishments." It is the most recent information of this type. Table 2 gives the total tons shipped by distance category and the percentage distribution.

Table 2. Shipments by Manufacturing Establishments, 1977 (Thousands of Tons)

under 100 miles	1,263,455	66.80%
100-199 miles	219,050	11.58%
200-299 miles	121,168	6.41%
300-499 miles	133,723	7.07%
500-999 miles	100,230	5.30%
1,000-1,499 miles	25,433	1.34%
1,500 miles and over	17,495	0.92%
Distance unknown	10,921	0.58%

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, *1983-84 Nationwide Personal Transportation Study,* November 1985, Table 18, p. 25.

We also used the 1983-84 Nationwide Personal Transportation Study (NPTS), which provides the most recent information for household vehicle trips. Table 3 gives the frequency of all annual household vehicle trips by trip distance category.

These data tell us the probability that the shipment of one ton of material or one household trip falls into a specific distance category.

Table 3. Annual Household Vehicle Trips, 1983 (Trips in Millions)

0-5 miles	79,243	62.45%
6-10 miles	23,686	18.67%
10-20 miles	15,213	11.99%
21-75 miles	7,873	6.20%
over 75 miles	872	0.69%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1977 Census of Transportation,* Commodity Transportation Survey, Summary, Table 7, pp. 678-81.

A few additional assumptions are necessary to derive the distance decay functions from these data:

- The distance weights within each of the categories are assumed to be linear functions of distance.
- The weight for distance zero is assumed to equal one.
- Open distance categories are neglected. This assumption can be justified by the observation that open distance categories extend over an infinitely large distance.

With these assumptions the distance decay function for household trips, for example, can be sketched as in Figure 1. The beginning and end of the graph are determined by assumptions two and three above. The empirical distribution in Table 3 gives us the ratios that the areas under the graph should reproduce. The numbers h1, h2, and h3 are unknown for the moment.

Writing down the formulae for the areas and setting their ratios equal to the observed ratios yields a system of three independent linear equations with three unknowns which can easily be solved. Similarly, for commodity shipments we get five equations with five unknowns.

Solving, we get the following distance decay functions:

Table 4. Distance Decay Function for Household Trips

$$f(d_{ij}) = 1.0000 - 0.062344 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 0 <= d_{ij} <= 5$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 1.0942 - 0.081180 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 5 <= d_{ij} <= 10$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.5354 - 0.025305 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 10 <= d_{ij} <= 20$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.0400 - 0.000533 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 20 <= d_{ij} <= 75$$

Table 5. Distance Decay Function for Commodities Shipments

$$f(d_{ij}) = 1.0000 - 0.004853 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 0 <= d_{ij} <= 100$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.7914 - 0.002767 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 100 <= d_{ij} <= 200$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.3574 - 0.000597 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 200 <= d_{ij} <= 300$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.3688 - 0.000635 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 300 <= d_{ij} <= 500$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.0853 - 0.000068 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 500 <= d_{ij} <= 1000$$
$$f(d_{ij}) = 0.0524 - 0.000035 * d_{ij} \text{ for } 1000 <= d_{ij} <= 1500$$

Figures 2 and 3 present graphical representations of these functions.

In general, the distance decay function for household trips was used for all of the population-related potentials while the distance decay function for commodities shipments was used for all of the income components for which input-output relationships are important.

We use the data for all 251 spatial units in the data set to calculate the potentials. However, only the 201 counties in Arkansas and surrounding states are used in the estimation procedure.

Figure 1. Sketch of Distance Decay Function

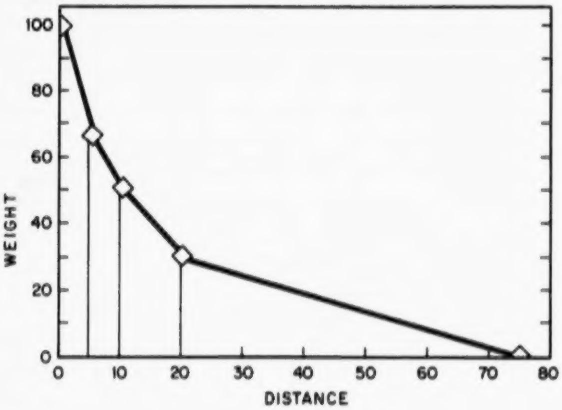


Figure 2. Distance Decay Function

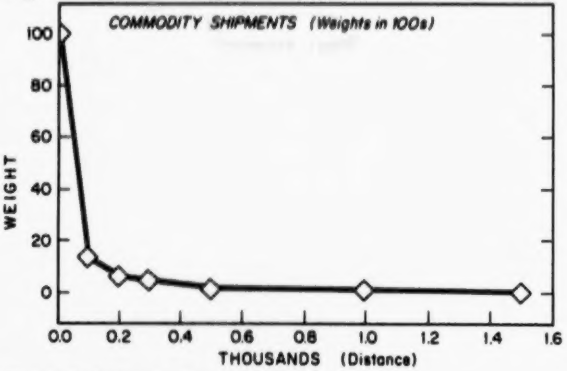
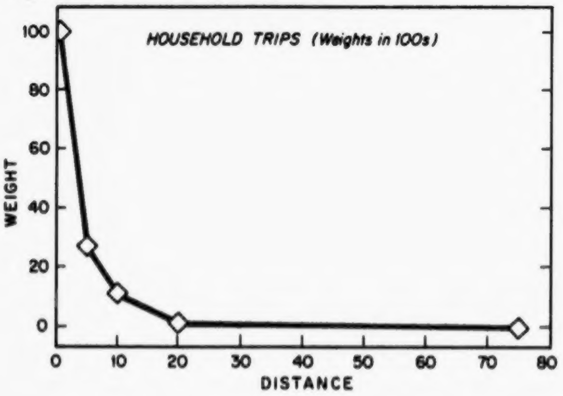


Figure 3. Distance Decay Function



Appendix 1: Nodes of the Highway Network

Fips-Code	County/State	Node
1000	Alabama	Montgomery
4000	Arizona	Phoenix
5001	Arkansas	Stuttgart
5003	Ashley	Crossett
5005	Baxter	Mtn. Home
5007	Benton	Bentonville
5009	Boone	Harrison
5011	Bradley	Warren
5013	Calhoun	Hampton
5015	Carroll	Berryville
5017	Chicot	Lake Village
5019	Clark	Arkadelphia
5021	Clay	Piggott
5023	Cleburne	Heber Sprs.
5025	Cleveland	Rison
5027	Columbia	Magnolia
5029	Conway	Morrilton
5031	Craighead	Jonesboro
5033	Crawford	Van Buren
5035	Crittenden	W. Memphis
5037	Cross	Wynne
5039	Dallas	Fordyce
5041	Desha	McGehee
5043	Drew	Monticello
5045	Faulkner	Conway
5047	Franklin	Ozark (I40 Exit 35)
5049	Fulton	Salem
5051	Garland	Hot Springs
5053	Grant	Sheridan
5055	Greene	Paragould
5057	Hempstead	Hope
5059	Hot Spring	Malvern
5061	Howard	Dierks
5063	Independence	Batesville
5065	Izard	Melbourne
5067	Jackson	Newport
5069	Jefferson	Pine Bluff
5071	Johnson	Clarksville
5073	Lafayette	Lewisville
5075	Lawrence	Hoxie
5077	Lee	Marianna
5079	Lincoln	Gould
5081	Little River	Ashdown
5083	Logan	Paris
5085	Lonoke	Lonoke
5087	Madison	Huntsville
5089	Marion	Yellville
5091	Miller	Texarkana
5093	Mississippi	Blytheville
5095	Monroe	Brinkley
5097	Montgomery	Mount Ida
5099	Nevada	Prescott
5101	Newton	Jasper

Fips-Code	County/State	Node
5103	Ouachita	Camden
5105	Perry	Perry
5107	Phillips	W. Helena
5109	Pike	Glenwood
5111	Poinsett	Trumann
5113	Polk	Mena
5115	Pope	Russelville
5117	Prairie	Hazen
5119	Pulaski	Little Rock
5121	Randolph	Pocahontas
5123	St Francis	Madison
5125	Saline	Benton
5127	Scott	Waldron
5129	Searcy	Marshall
5131	Sebastian	Fort Smith
5133	Sevier	De Queen
5135	Sharp	Ash Flat
5137	Stone	Mtn. View
5139	Union	El Dorado
5141	Van Buren	Clinton
5143	Washington	Fayetteville
5145	White	Searcy
5147	Woodruff	Mc Crory
5149	Yell	Dardanelle
6000	California	Los Angeles
8000	Colorado	Denver
9000	Connecticut	Hartford
10000	Delaware	Wilmington
11000	District Columbia	Washington
12000	Florida	Tampa
13000	Georgia	Atlanta
16000	Idaho	Boise
17000	Illinois	Chicago
18000	Indiana	Indianapolis
19000	Iowa	De Moines
20000	Kansas	Topeka
21000	Kentucky	Louisville
22000	Louisiana	New Orleans
22013	Bienville	Arcadia
22015	Bossier	Bossier City
22017	Caddo	Shreveport
22027	Claiborne	Homer
22035	East Carroll	Lake Providence
22061	Lincoln	Ruston
22065	Madison	Tallulah
22067	Morehouse	Bastrop
22073	Ouachita	Monroe
22083	Richland	Raville
22111	Union	Bernice
22119	Webster	Minden
22123	West Carroll	Oak Grove
23000	Maine	Portland
24000	Maryland	Baltimore
25000	Massachussets	Boston

Fips-Code	County/State	Node
26000	Michigan	Detroit
27000	Minnesota	Minneapolis
28000	Mississippi	Meridian
28003	Alcorn	Corinth
28009	Benton	Ashland
28011	Bolivar	Cleveland
28013	Calhoun	Calhoun City
29015	Carroll	Carrollton
28027	Coahoma	Clarksdale
28033	De Soto	Southaven
28043	Grenada	Grenada
28049	Hinds	Jackson
28051	Holmes	Durant I-55
28053	Humphreys	Belzoni
28055	Issaquena	Valley Park
28071	Lafayette	Oxford
28081	Lee	Tupelo
28083	Leflore	Greenwood
28089	Madison	Canton
28093	Marshall	Holly Springs
28097	Montgomery	Winona
28107	Panola	Batesville
28115	Pontotoc	Pontotoc
28117	Prentiss	Booneville
28119	Quitman	Marks
28121	Rankin	Pearl
28125	Sharkey	Rolling Fork
28133	Sunflower	Indianola
28135	Tallahatchie	Charleston
28137	Tate	Senatobia
28139	Tippah	Ripley
28143	Tunica	Tunica
28145	Union	New Albany
28149	Warren	Vicksburg
28151	Washington	Greenville
28161	Yalobusha	Oakland
28163	Yazoo	Yazoo City
29000	Missouri	St. Louis
29009	Barry	Cassvill
29023	Butler	Poplar Bluff
29035	Carter	Van Buren
29043	Christian	Ozark
29067	Douglas	Ava
29069	Dunklin	Malden
29077	Greene	Springfield
29091	Howell	West Plains
29097	Jasper	Webb City
29109	Lawrence	Mount Vernon
29119	McDonald	Anderson
29133	Mississippi	Charleston
29143	New Madrid	New Madrid
29145	Newton	Joplin
29149	Oregon	Thayer
29153	Ozark	Gainesville
29155	Pemiscot	Hayti

Fips-Code	County/State	Node
29181	Ripley	Doniphan
29201	Scott	Sikeston
29203	Shannon	Winona
29207	Stoddard	Dexter
29209	Stone	Crane
29213	Taney	Branson
29215	Texas	Cabool
29225	Webster	Marshfield
29229	Wright	Mansfield
30000	Montana	Billings
31000	Nebraska	Omaha
32000	Nevada	Las Vegas
33000	New Hampshire	Manchester
34000	New Jersey	Newark
35000	New Mexico	Albuquerque
36000	New York	New York City
37000	North Carolina	Raleigh
38000	North Dakota	Fargo
39000	Ohio	Columbus
40000	Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
40001	Adair	West Ville
40021	Cherokee	Tahlequah
40023	Choctaw	Hugo
40035	Craig	Vinita
40041	Dellaware	W.Siloam Spgs.
40061	Haskell	Stigler
40077	Latimer	Wilburton
40079	LeFlore	Poteau
40089	McCurtain	Broken Bow
40091	McIntosh	Checotah
40097	Mayes	Couteau
40101	Muskogee	Muskoee
40105	Nowata	Nowata
40111	Okmulgee	Henryetta
40115	Ottawa	Miami
40121	Pittsburg	McAlester
40127	Ushmataha	Antlers
40131	Rogers	Claremore
40135	Sequoyah	Sallisaw
40143	Tulsa	Tulsa
40145	Wagoner	Tullahassee
40147	Washington	Dewey
41000	Oregon	Portland
42000	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia
44000	Rhode Island	Providence
45000	South Carolina	Columbia
46000	South Dakota	Sioux Falls
47000	Tennessee	Nashville
47023	Chester	Henderson
47033	Crockett	Alamo
47045	Dyer	Dyersburg
47047	Fayette	Somerville
47053	Gibson	Trenton
47069	Hardeman	Bolivar
47075	Haywood	Brownsville I-40

Fips-Code	County/State	Node
47095	Lake	Tiptonville
47097	Lauderdale	Ripley
47109	McNairy	Selmer
47113	Madison	Jackson
47131	Obion	Union City
47157	Shelby	Memphis
47167	Tipton	Covington
47183	Weakley	Martin
48000	Texas No	Dallas
48037	Bowie	Texarkana
48063	Camp	Pittsburgh
48067	Cass	Atlanta
48100	Texas NW	Amarillo
48119	Delta	Cooper
48159	Franklin	Mountvernon
48183	Gregg	Longview
48200	Texas South	San Antonio
48203	Harrison	Marshall
48223	Hopkins	Sulphur Springs
48277	Lamar	Paris
48315	Marion	Jefferson
48343	Moriss	Daingerfield
48387	Red River	Clarksville
48423	Smith	Tyler
48449	Titus	Mount Pleasant
48459	Upshur	Ore City
49499	Wood	Mineola
49000	Utah	Salt Lake City
50000	Vermont	Burlington
51000	Virginia	Richmond
53000	Washington	Seattle
54000	West Virginia	Charleston
55000	Wisconsin	Milwaukee
56000	Wyoming	Cheyenne

Persistent Low Income Areas in the United States: Some Conceptual Challenges

David L. Brown* and Mildred Warner*

The person vs place distinction has been a major theme in poverty research and policy in the United States. The personal perspective focuses on individual and/or family attributes associated with entering, exiting or persisting in poverty; while the place perspective emphasizes characteristics of local infrastructure and institutions, especially the local economy and labor market, as determinants of differential rates of poverty among areas. While this distinction is somewhat artificial, since the ultimate intent of anti-poverty policy is to improve the well-being of individuals and families wherever they reside, it cannot be denied that the rural poor tend to be geographically concentrated and that the characteristics of place of residence condition opportunities to escape poverty.

Recent discussions of progress against poverty (or lack thereof) have concentrated on the changing fortunes of individuals and/or families, while, with the possible exception of inner-city ghettos, place poverty has been relatively neglected. This paper seeks to redress this balance somewhat by focusing on rural poverty, and in specific on rural areas that have been poor throughout the War on Poverty years and into the present. We will identify these persistent low-income rural areas, compare their sociodemographic and economic characteristics with those of other rural areas, ask questions about which conceptual frameworks may be helpful in explaining why they became and persist as low-income areas in the midst of an advanced industrial society, and propose some challenges for policy development.

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Background

An official poverty rate of over 17 percent in 1964 helped to convince President Johnson of the need to wage a "War on Poverty".[1] Considerable progress against poverty was made during the next 15 years as the official poverty rate fell to 11.7 percent by 1979. The anti-poverty effectiveness of the War on Poverty's broad range of social and labor market programs is still a matter of academic and policy debate, but it is undeniable that the nation's poverty rate would be considerably higher if not for the cash (and in-kind) transfer programs developed during these decades. In fact, the pre-transfer poor remained constant at about 20 percent of the U.S. population during this period, while the percentage of persons who were poor after the receipt of cash transfers declined by about 30 percent (Haveman 1987).[2]

The severe recession of the early 1980's refocused attention on poverty, as the nation's poverty rate increased from 11.7 percent in 1979 to 15.2 percent in 1983. The economy has recovered since then and the national poverty rate has responded by falling to 13.5 percent. However, not all areas (or population subgroups) have shared equally in this recovery. Nonmetropolitan areas, in particular, have not benefited as much as metropolitan areas from upturns in the business cycle (Henry, et al 1987). The nonmetropolitan poverty rate did not turn down until 1987, and the inflation-adjusted income gap between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas has grown steadily wider each year since the recession. In 1987 nonmetropolitan per capita income was only 72 percent of metropolitan income, compared to 77 percent in 1979 (Hoppe and Bellamy 1989).[3] The severity of nonmetropolitan poverty can be judged by the fact that the poverty rate in eight highly rural states still exceeds 17 percent, the national rate that triggered the War on Poverty in 1964 (Plotnick and Danziger 1988).[4]

Ironically, while present-day discussions of poverty and anti-poverty policy highlight inner-city ghetto situations (Pearson, 1989; Wilson 1987), they seldom include explicit recognition of the severity of rural poverty. The truth is that poverty is disproportionately concentrated in *both* central cities and nonmetropolitan areas. Twenty-eight percent of the nation's poor persons live in nonmetropolitan counties compared with only 22 percent of the total population. The central city shares of poor and total population are 42 and 31 percent respectively. Recent data from the *Current Population Survey* further indicate the similar extent of nonmetropolitan and central-city poverty rates, 16.9 and 18.6, respectively. In contrast, the poverty rate of metropolitan suburbs is only 8.5 percent (U.S. Bureau of Census 1989). This lack of attention to rural poverty is difficult to explain. Many social scientists dismiss rural poverty, explaining that it is not the rural environment per se that contributes to high poverty rates, but rather the characteristics of persons who are concentrated in rural areas. On the contrary, the data indicate that the characteristics of the nonmetropolitan poor would lead one to expect lower poverty rates there, not higher rates. Compared with their counterparts in central cities, nonmetropolitan poor families are more likely to be white, more likely to be intact husband/wife units, and more likely to contain at least one worker. In fact, almost one-quarter of all nonmetropolitan poor families contains two or more workers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989).

The "invisibility" of rural poverty is another possible explanation for its neglect (Harrington, 1981). However, while some rural poverty may be hidden by geographic isolation or camouflaged by pleasant scenery, it is highly visible in national statistics. Both the poverty rate and the absolute number of nonmetropolitan poor persons is large relative to other residential sectors. The 9.1 million poor persons living in nonmetropolitan areas represent a population that is 65 percent as large as the 13.9 million poor people living in metropolitan central cities.

Moreover, the nonmetropolitan poor population tends to be concentrated in Appalachia, across the mid-south and in the Mississippi Delta. This is not to say that other regions do not contain a substantial number of poor nonmetropolitan persons, but rather that the poor constitute a disproportionately large share of the total population in these Southern subregions. Thus, we do not believe that rural poverty is an obscure phenomenon that can be easily dismissed. We suspect that the lack of highly visible social problems associated with rural poverty, as well as the lack of local political concern, reduces its salience as a national political issue. Most national policy debates have focused on cultural rather than structural explanations of poverty (Duncan and Tickamyer). The rural poor are considered to be "poor but honest," whereas the ghetto poor are perceived of as being involved in aberrant behavior. Indications are, however, that crime, drugs and other kinds of social pathology are growing in rural poor areas, as well.

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[1] The official poverty rate includes cash transfers as money income, but does not count the cash value of in-kind transfers.

[2] The percentage of persons who were poor after the receipt of cash *and* in-kind transfers declined by 55 percent from 13.4 percent in 1965 to 6.1 percent in 1979. A recent Census Bureau study found that benefit programs lifted 15.1 million persons out of poverty in 1986. Social Security and Medicare, which are not based on financial need, were found to lower poverty more than other government programs (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1988).

[3] While there are no official estimates of cost-of-living differences between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, most economists believe that it does not take as much money to live in rural areas and small towns. However, even applying the very liberal measures developed by Hoch and his associates (1984), only one-half the metropolitan-nonmetropolitan income differential is offset by cost-of-living differences. In addition, Ghelfi (1989) showed that urban-rural cost-of-living differences in Wisconsin are due to the higher proportion of rural households that hold older, less costly, home mortgages. Lower home ownership among the poor reduces the relevance of cost-of-living differences in comparing the material position in urban and rural areas.

[4] West Virginia (22.8), South Carolina (17.6), Kentucky (18.5), Tennessee (17.8), Alabama (21.5), Mississippi (25.6), Arkansas (22.4), Louisiana (20.8), New Mexico (20.7).

The Nonmetropolitan Places Left Behind

An insidious aspect of rural poverty is that it tends to persist in particular geographic areas over time. In fact, the income levels in some persistently poor nonmetropolitan areas do not appear to respond very much to changes in the national economy. There are several ways to identify chronically depressed areas. The USDA's Economic Research Service ranked nonmetropolitan counties by per capita income in 1950, and has followed the bottom quintile over succeeding years. By 1969 about half (298) of the original group of counties was still in the lowest quintile. During the next 15 years 92 of these counties improved their income sufficiently to exit the category, leaving a core of 206 counties that have been in the lowest income group for at least 35 years (Bellamy 1989).

Alternatively, areas can be identified by a high percentage in poverty. The map of these two county delineations is not necessarily the same, although the general patterns have much in common. High poverty counties also have relatively low per capita income, but some of them are not included in the PLI category because of extreme inequities in income, especially between blacks and whites. In these instances the high white income levels elevate per capita income enough to eliminate the county from the PLI category, but this may not alter the percent in poverty. These "places left behind," whether delineated as PLI or high poverty rate counties, are the principal focus of the remainder of our paper.[5]

Figure 1. Low Per Capita Income States, 1986 and Persistent Low Income Counties. State nonmetro per capita incomes below $11,300. Counties in lowest 20% of nonmetro counties since 1950. (Economic Research Service, USDA)

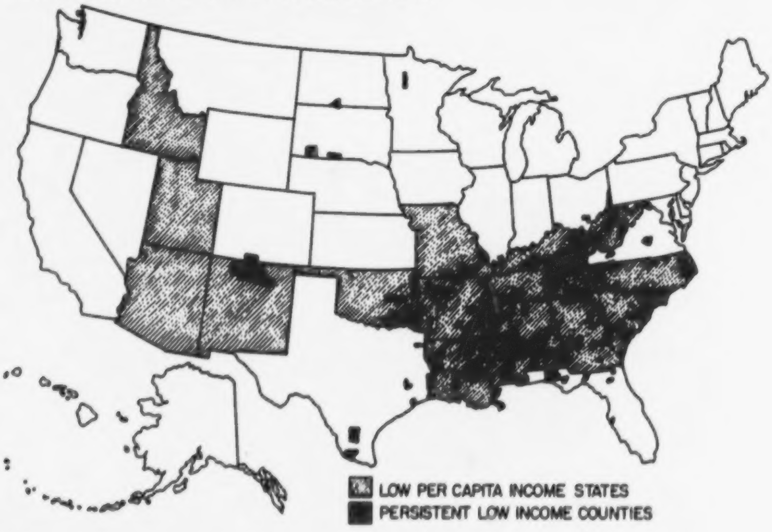
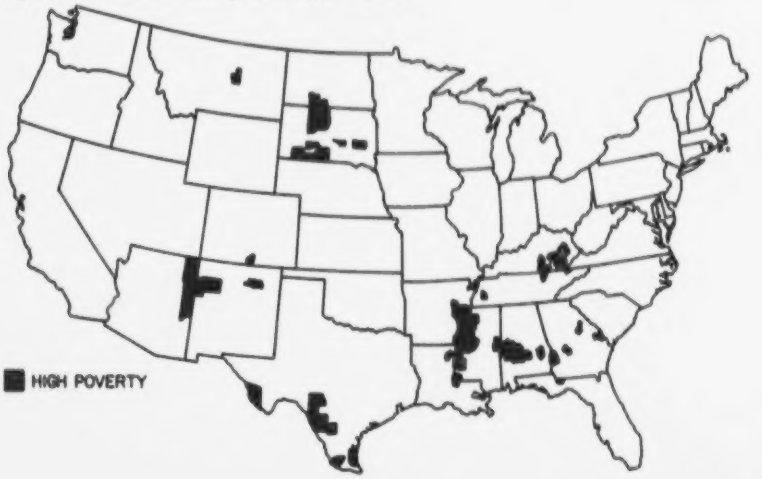

▨ LOW PER CAPITA INCOME STATES
■ PERSISTENT LOW INCOME COUNTIES

Figure 2. Counties with High Poverty Incidence



Location. Persistent low-income counties (PLI) are mainly located in the South (all but 18), but within that region they are concentrated in four distinct subareas—Appalachia, the Southern Coastal Plain and Black Belt from North Carolina to eastern Mississippi, the Mississippi Delta, and the Ozark-Ouachita plateau (Figure 1). The location of persistent low-income counties bears a resemblance to the map of the 100 nonmetropolitan counties with highest poverty rates, but there are distinct differences, as well (Figure 2). The Mississippi Delta, Black Belt, Appalachia and the Ozark-Ouachita plateau appear on both maps, but the high poverty rate counties extend into the Rio Grande Valley, throughout Hispanic-dominated areas of the Southwest, and to Native American areas of the upper Great Plains (Figure 2). Overall, 54 of the top 100 nonmetropolitan poverty counties are also persistent low-income areas (Morrissey 1985).

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[5] Counties might also have been grouped by percentage in poverty in an earlier year, and the highest quintile followed over time. However, since the statistical definition of poverty is revised from time to time, some counties could exit the high poverty group because of definitional change, not because of an improvement in their income distribution.

Socioeconomic Characteristics. A comparative profile of persistent low-income and other southern nonmetropolitan counties is presented in Table 1. These data permit us to determine whether gross differences in sociodemographic characteristics are associated with the markedly different levels of material well-being in these two categories of counties. We compare county size and location, human capital endowments, and economic structure, factors frequently cited as accounting for area differences in economic development and material well-being. The depressed economic condition of persistent low-income counties is clearly indicated by their per capita income which is only 72 percent as high as in other nonmetropolitan counties of the South, and by their average poverty rate which is 40 percent higher (29.2 percent and 20.8 percent respectively.)

Table 1. Comparative Profile of Persistent Low Income and Other Nonmetropolitan Counties, South 1984[1]

Item	Low Income	Other Nonmetro.
Number of Counties	188	883
Size and Location		
Population per county	16,379	28,818
Pct. Rural (1980)	86.0	68.2
Adjacent to Metropolitan (1980)	30.9	49.0
Population Characteristics		
Per Capita Income	$ 6,999	$ 9,721
Pct. Black (1980)	24.5	15.6
Pct. Adults Completed high school (1980)	39.8	48.1
Pct. Families below Poverty	29.2	20.8
Labor Force		
Employment/Population Ratio	33.1	43.0
Unemployment Rate	12.9	8.6
Economic Structure		
Sources of Income		
Pct. Earnings	60.0	62.2
Pct. Property Income	16.4	20.2
Pct. Transfer Payments	23.6	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Earnings by Industry		
Pct. Farming	10.7	9.1
Pct. Mining	4.6	6.3
Pct. Construction	5.2	5.6
Pct. Manufacturing	23.8	24.5
Pct. Services	33.6	36.8
Pct. Government	22.0	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0

[1] Data are for 1984 unless otherwise noted.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Bureau of Census as computed by Bellamy and Ghelfi (1989).

The data in Table 1 suggest that small population size, a low level of urbanization, and relative isolation from metropolitan centers have constrained economic development in PLI areas. These attributes reduce PLI counties' ability to benefit from economies of scale or possible cooperative associations with nearby metropolises, limit opportunities for economic diversification, and negatively affect the capacity (fiscal and otherwise) of local governments and other institutions to provide infrastructure and public services that support economic development, human capital development, and social welfare. Moreover, regardless of county size, PLI residents share in a much smaller pool of income than is true in other nonmetropolitan areas of the South ($114 million vs $280 million per county on average.)

The data also indicate that PLI counties are at a substantial human capital disadvantage compared with other nonmetropolitan areas in the South. For example, only four of ten PLI adults have completed high school compared with over half of adults in other nonmetropolitan counties (and two-thirds of adults in southern metropolitan areas). In addition, earlier data presented by Hoppe (1985) comparing PLI counties to all nonmetropolitan counties showed them to have a higher rate of work limiting disabilities, a higher proportion of female-headed families, and a slightly higher proportion of elderly. Labor utilization is also lower in PLI counties. The unemployment rate in 1984 was higher in PLI counties than in the rest of the nonmetropolitan South, and the employment to population ratio was one-quarter lower. Accordingly, labor-force-age persons in PLI counties are marginalized from the work force more often than is true in other parts of the nonmetropolitan South. This difference is reflected in the sources of income data which indicate that persons living in PLI counties derive a substantially higher proportion of their incomes from cash transfer payments (24 percent vs 18 percent).

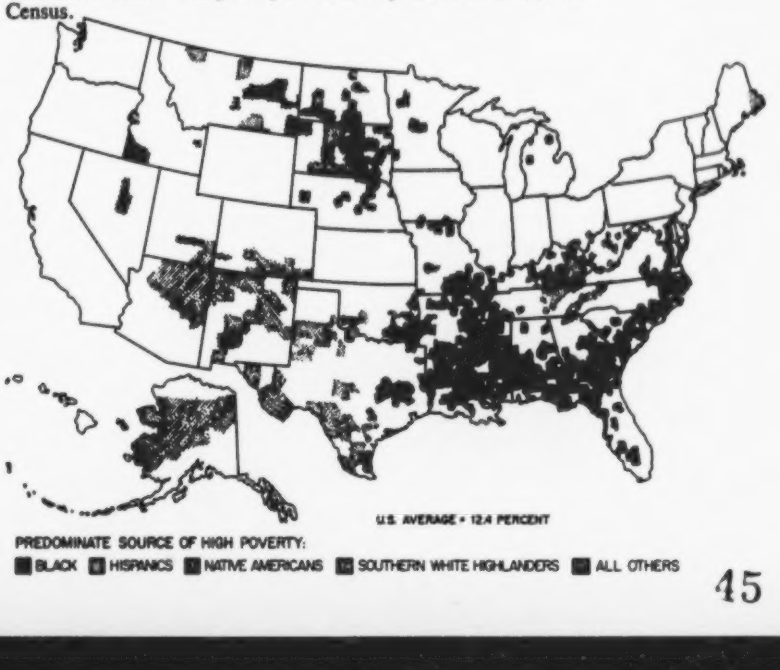
Industrial Composition. Curiously, given their lower labor force participation and higher unemployment rate, the proportion of income derived from wages and salaries does not differ much between PLI and other counties, but as we have pointed out earlier, the total income available in PLI counties is so much smaller that this in itself contributes to low average personal income.

The industrial composition of earnings, at least as reflected by highly aggregated industrial categories, is also similar to the rest of the nonmetropolitan South. We suspect that a more detailed breakdown of these gross industrial categories would show that a higher proportion of PLI county manufacturing, for example, is routine production, and that a disproportionately large share of PLI workers performs routine tasks within these industries. However, at the gross level included in Table 1, the representation of industries in PLI counties does not appear to differentiate them from the rest of the nonmetropolitan South. It should be noted that this is not necessarily beneficial, because manufacturing in the rural South overall tends to be in the low wage and low skill peripheral-type industries, such as textiles, apparel, furniture, timber and leather products. In fact, Falk and Lyson (1988) have shown that almost one-half of manufacturing in the rural South is peripheral compared with about one-fifth of manufacturing in the region's urban areas.[6]

Race and Class. Low income and racial minority populations are often concentrated in the same counties. In the southeast, for example, one-quarter of the PLI county population is black, compared with only 16 percent of the population of other nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 3 illustrates that nonmetropolitan counties with high poverty rates can be subdivided into four major areas based on racial and/or ethnic-cultural heritage. Within each of these areas it is the economic condition of the key racial or ethnic groups that accounts for the high poverty rates (Fuguitt et al. 1989). Hispanics predominate in the Rio Grande Valley and adjoining southern Plains counties; Native Americans in the Four Corners region of the Southwest and northern Plains; white highlanders in Appalachia and in the Ozark-Ouachita areas; and blacks in a broad sweep of counties that extends from the Southern Coastal Plains through the Black Belt and throughout the Mississippi Delta. The latter area represents the heart of the old agricultural South, where the imprint of the plantation economy and the tenancy system that followed it is still evident in the social structure. Southern agriculture was not reorganized after the Civil War to make room for independent black farmers. The tenancy system which developed enabled freed blacks and poor whites to eke out a living by continuing to provide labor and menial services to large land owners who gained most of the profit. Jim Crow legislation further solidified this stratification system and tied blacks more tightly to tenancy, since land-holding whites dominated the credit, legal, educational, political and economic systems throughout most of the South (Taeuber, 1988).

Despite much progress, the level of rural poverty in the South is still extremely high, with substantially higher rates for blacks than whites in the same counties. Black poverty rates are especially high in counties where the size and/or proportion of the black population is high. For example, Washington (1986) showed that black median family income was less than half as high as white median family income in 14 Delta counties with over 40 percent black population in Mississippi. Over 75 percent of black adults had not completed high school in these counties compared with one-third of whites, and over a quarter of black dwelling units lacked complete plumbing, compared with less than 2 percent of white units.[7] In addition to these socioeconomic differences, Washington showed that compared with the rest of the nonmetropolitan South, high percentage black rural counties had extremely low levels of public infrastructure such as hospitals and medical facilities. Although the Appalachian Regional Commission has made significant investments in community infrastructure, similar disadvantages in educational attainment and housing quality are also found in high poverty white counties in Appalachia.

Figure 3. Ethno/Cultural Charcter of High Poverty Areas, 1980. Nonmetro counties with poverty rate of 20.0 percent or more, 1980 Census.


U.S. AVERAGE = 12.4 PERCENT
PREDOMINATE SOURCE OF HIGH POVERTY:
BLACK
HISPANICS
NATIVE AMERICANS
SOUTHERN WHITE HIGHLANDERS
ALL OTHERS

Explaining Persistent Low Income Areas: Alternative Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Challenges

Persistent regional concentrations of poverty are often explained as an outcome of low rates of economic growth and developmental change. Growth and development however, must be distinguished in such discussions. Economic growth implies more output and greater efficiency in production, both of which are considered critical for increasing employment and reducing the incidence of poverty. As aggregate demand for goods and services increases in a local economy so does demand for resources of the poor (i.e. labor power) thus increasing employment and income. Development, in contrast, goes beyond economic growth to imply structural and institutional changes which promote a more equitable distribution of new jobs and income generated by growth (Herrick and Kindleberger, 1983). Thus, poverty reduction not only rests on economic growth, but also on developmental changes that generate adequate incomes from work, reduce institutional barriers to material well being (such as discrimination, locational isolation and price fixing), and provide adequate support to those unable to work (the elderly, disabled and women with small children) who represent a disproportionate share of the rural poor (Bryant, Bawden and Saupe, 1981).

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[6] For a discussion of the dual economy paradigm see Horan, et. al., 1980.

[7] Washington (1986) documented similar racial disparities in a 16 county area of the Alabama Black Belt.

The persistent low income and high poverty counties which are the focus of this paper are characterized by low rates of economic growth and by a relative lack of developmental change. Insufficient integration with national markets, low productivity and an underdeveloped resource base (including physical infrastructure and human capital) characterize these areas and contribute to their lack of growth and development. The distinction between growth and development implies that economic growth may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction in depressed areas.

> . . . the poverty rate in eight highly rural states still exceeds 17 percent, the national rate that triggered the War on Poverty in 1964.

A number of growth and development theories have been proposed to explain aspects of the phenomena of persistent regional underdevelopment and poverty. While a systematic review of these theories is not attempted here, key attributes of various perspectives are discussed to highlight their contributions to the development debate. Insights provided by neoclassical theory are considered as well as the political economy perspectives represented by the structuralist and critical approaches. Our discussion is grounded in neoclassical economic thought, but we want to briefly consider challenges offered by Marxist and dependency theories that may deepen our understanding of uneven development. The goal in this review is to identify conceptual challenges which may contribute to a more effective understanding of and response to problems of persistent poverty and underdevelopment in the context of our advanced industrial society.

Three theoretical perspectives are outlined below in an attempt to highlight their key attributes and differences. Each perspective places differing levels of importance on the role of the marketplace and government policy in development. Much of the theoretical work mentioned does not fall neatly within one perspective. However, in order to draw out some of the challenges stemming from root differences we have chosen to highlight individual contributions within one of three broad traditions: neoclassical, structural/dependency, and critical/Marxist.[8]

Neoclassical Perspective. Neoclassical development theory focuses on the role of market and price mechanisms in determining the direction and nature of economic development. Differences in individual preferences are sorted out in the marketplace through substitution and exchange relationships which promote utility maximization. Implicit assumptions of harmonization of interests through the market mechanism, and of an economy which tends toward equilibrium, discourage direct attention to social and political factors. Benefits from economic growth are expected to "trickle down" within the system. Thus the role of public policy is to promote private competition.

Structuralist/Dependency Perspective. Differentiation among economic sectors (productive sectors, composition of the labor force and investment) is considered critical to explain persisting disequilibria as manifested by excess supplies in some markets and excess demand in others. These disequilibria may prevent the erosion of interregional and interpersonal differentials and instead promote further concentration of income among the wealthy, and stagnation among the poor. Structuralists emphasize the role of structural and developmental change to promote harmonization of interests and erosion of these inter-regional differences. Dependency theorists, in contrast, emphasize the importance of external exploitation in blocking internal development and preventing articulation of divergent interests into common societal goals. Lagging regions are perpetually marginalized. While structuralists rely on market forces to promote structural change, dependency theorists stress the need for governmental intervention and effective internal control of the economic base to promote structural change.

Critical or Marxist Perspective. Critical theorists stress the importance of the role of history and social and political relations in economic development. They are impatient with the static equilibrium of neoclassical theory, and stress the importance of a continuing process of conflict between opposing forces to reach synthesis and promote change. The role of both external and internal forces in capital penetration and exploitation is emphasized. The particularistic, empirical nature of this analysis, rooted in the "scientific" historical context, frustrates attempts to suggest universal conclusions. Public policy, itself a product of socio/political/economic relations, is unlikely to address fundamental change needed for equitable development. Heightening contradictions ultimately may result in class-based revolution and radical social change.

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[8] Discussion is based in part on Herrick and Kindleberger 1983, and Howard and King 1975.

While much development thinking in the U.S. has been guided by a neoclassical perspective, we believe that attention to regional or sectoral differences and the role of politics and social relations as advocated by the structuralist and critical approaches offers an important opportunity to further our understanding of the dynamics of persistent poverty and underdevelopment. Many U.S. rural development programs have been guided by the assumption that strategies to increase economic growth will result in a decrease in poverty. Because the rural poor have relatively high levels of attachment to the labor force, economic growth strategies, particularly those that promote higher employment and wage levels, may have a positive impact on rural poverty reduction. There is mixed evidence for this point. Martin (1979) evaluated Economic Development Administration programs and showed that they played a role in stimulating growth in lagging areas. Howland and Miller (1988) showed that Urban Development Action Grants created and retained jobs in depressed rural areas. In contrast, if we look at coal producing areas of Central Appalachia, we note that despite improvements in infrastructure (resulting from activities of the Appalachian Regional Commission) and growth in aggregate income and industrialization, these counties continue to have a skewed income distribution and persistent poverty (Tickamyer and Tickamyer 1986).

What factors explain this persistent low income status even during periods of growth? Why doesn't increased economic activity necessarily result in a further reduction in poverty?

. . . land-holding whites dominated the credit, legal, educational, political and economic systems throughout most of the South . . .

First, let us consider the key elements underlying conventional explanations of differential regional economic growth. Later we will review alternative critical perspectives which place more emphasis on social and political forces in determining the nature and level of economic growth. Most neoclassical theories have tended to emphasize the overriding explanatory power of market variables in stimulating regional economic growth. In reviewing theories of regional economic growth, Clark Edwards identified five bases of growth which formed the focus of many market-oriented models of uneven development. Typically, uneven development is characterized by some form of market failure caused by endogenous economic factors, or by exogenous non-economic factors that interfere with market operation. Edwards recommended a more comprehensive neoclassical framework which incorporated five bases of economic growth in an integrated fashion. Theoretical contributions to each of these bases are indicated below:

Increasing Resource Availability—Regional variations in growth are explained by variations in the availability and quality of land, labor, and capital. Most neoclassical theories focus attention on capital accumulation and the role of public investment to stimulate regional growth.

Advancing Technology—Technological change is a key to growth. Endogenous economic forces induce technical and institutional change. However, technical change may have negative impacts on labor (displacement) and quality of life (e.g. routinization of work, environmental externalities).

Expanding Markets—Exchange is a basis for growth. Increasing demand through exports, government and business investment stimulates growth due to comparative advantage and multiplier impacts. However, free trade among regions may contribute to differential growth and under-development in some areas.

Conquering Space—Location and distance may be important barriers to economic growth. Some theories suggest complementarity between urban and rural hinterlands which facilitates rural area economic growth; others suggest rural areas decline due to technical and market conditions which favor urban areas.

Building Institutions—Institutions can facilitate the other bases of growth (through worker training, zoning, financial regulations), or serve vital economic functions independent of the other bases of growth (e.g. building local leadership). Purposive institution building may modify unsatisfactory results of the competitive status quo such as divergent regional growth, uncertainty, market failure (especially in the case of public goods) and distributional inequities.

These extensions of the neoclassical framework help us to understand why regional economic development is sometimes uneven in advanced capitalist economies, but given the concept of development used here, with its focus on inequality and persistent poverty, distributional criteria must be made explicit. Jansma and his colleagues (1981) do this in their review of current rural development theories. They suggested a conceptual framework which included socio-economic aspects (micro-efficiency concepts), the role of organizational and institutional forces (macro-efficiency concepts), and the role of spatial arrangements. They questioned the acceptability of the commonly used Pareto efficiency framework as a measure of micro-efficiency in development because the equilibrium, consumer sovereignty and resource mobility assumptions are often not met, and because Pareto efficiency accepts a given income distribution. In the macroeconomic context they stressed the need to address the role of political mechanisms in allocating goods among competing interests. Their analysis showed the impact of alternative distributional perspectives on choice of conceptual frameworks and policy responses to promote regional development.[9] These alternate perspectives also affect policy responses within a spatial framework. For example, efficiency advocates recommend regional investments be made to areas of highest marginal return, while equity advocates stress the need for public investment to overcome chronic underinvestment in depressed regions. Drabenstott and his colleagues (1987) draw a similar distinction in their discussion of transitional versus economic development policies for depressed rural areas. These differing perspectives illustrate that measurement of regional policy benefits depends on the viewpoint from which one is evaluating the policy.

If development is viewed primarily as a market-perfecting process, then development failure is explained either by market failure or by exogenous non-economic factors that interfere with market operation (Herrick and Kindleberger, 1983). Is such a dichotomy between economic and non-economic factors useful, or is there a process of two-way causation between social, political and cultural factors and the process of economic development? Both Jansma et. al. and Edwards indicate that such a dichotomy is not useful. They emphasize the shortcomings of theories which focus on one base of growth or one distributional perspective and call for a comprehensive approach which would address development as a function of markets, capital, technology, location and social and political institutions. Indeed, much theoretical work has focused on the importance of 'noneconomic' factors in development analysis (e.g., Tweeten and Brinkman, 1976; Hayami and Ruttan, 1985).

Recognition of two-way causation between social and economic forces is not a new idea. Marx criticized early classical theorists for failing to emphasize the fundamentally social nature of economic relations. He suggested that social relations were not exogenous to the economic system but rather determined by and determining of economic structure (Howard and King, 1975). Recognition of the mutual causation between social and economic change is necessary to explain why some areas (and population groups) are chronically poor. Despite this contribution from Marxist thought, robust models that give comprehensive attention to the relationships between social and economic forces have not been well articulated either in the neoclassical or Marxist schools.

Recognition of the mutual causation between social and economic change is necessary to explain why some areas (and population groups) are chronically poor.

Early growth stage theorists, of which Marx was one, sought to explain the process of development from agrarian to industrial economy as one of structural transformation. A number of dual economy models were formulated to explain how traditional lagging sectors or regions are incorporated into the modern economy. These theories were critiqued as providing descriptive models of western economic development, but failing to provide sufficient insight into the nature and causes of such transformations. The more radical dependency perspective which grew from this debate suggests that incorporation does not lead to a disappearance of dualism but rather perpetuates marginalization of lagging regions. Development of lagging regions is "blocked" by extraction of economic surplus by areas with more developed capitalist concentrations (de Janvry quoted in Hayami and Ruttan 1985, Blomstrom and Hettne 1984).

Dependency perspectives are most fully developed in Latin America, but they occasionally have been used to look at uneven development in the U.S. For example, despite exploitation of vast mineral reserves in Appalachia, little economic development benefit has accrued to the region. A dependency perspective would emphasize the relationship between external forces (concentrated absentee ownership and external investment in mineral extraction) and local elites to secure low taxation rates and other public subsidies to the coal industry. These relationships maximize mineral exploitation without promoting broader economic development (Lewis and Gaventa quoted in Billings 1988). A neoclassical perspective, in contrast, would view such investments in infrastructure and reduction in taxes as appropriate incentives to overcome regional disparities and promote growth and development.

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[9] These distributional perspectives are self-interest, equity, and efficiency. Self-interest advocates stress the need to increase aggregate income to increase demand for their products. This traditional economic base approach is the motivation for many industrial development programs. Equity advocates stress the need to increase per capita income through increased productivity. Viewed from this vantage point, development policy should increase the standard of living of a broad spectrum of a region's population. This goal is achieved through public investments to reduce unfavorable comparative advantage. Efficiency advocates stress market imperfections which result in differences in regional factor prices. Public policy should reduce barriers and promote efficient regional capital and labor markets (Leven in Jansma et. al. 1981).

Although dependency theorists attempt to understand the role of capital accumulation in conditioning the formation of domestic production systems, class structure, and socio-cultural institutions, they have been criticized by more radical theorists for relying too heavily on external forces in explaining uneven development. The critics, adhering more closely to the classical Marxist tradition, emphasize the important role of internal class relations, local government, and the structure and dynamics of local industry as factors explaining differential development among regions.

This return to the fundamental propositions of classical Marxism has been evidenced in the debate over internationalization of capital. With the appearance of development in the newly industrialized countries, more attention is being given to the relations between external investment, local elites and the state in defining the nature of economic development (Marcussen and Torp 1982). With the exception of one recent study by Howes and Markusen (1981) of underdevelopment in Appalachia, however, little attention has been given to this perspective in U.S. development debates.

Discussion and Policy Relevance

The above debate has offered alternative perspectives on the nature of development and underdevelopment. The neoclassical attention to markets, location, resource availability, technology, and institutions is critical in explaining regional underdevelopment. However, the need to incorporate historical, social, and political concerns as suggested by the dependency and critical schools is also important. Little attention has been given to these latter perspectives in discussions of uneven regional development in the United States. As a result, the base of empirical research to support the conceptual challenges which we outline below is weak. While one should be cautious in applying theories developed primarily in a developing country context to explain persistent underdevelopment in an advanced industrial society, we feel that the conceptual challenges offered by critical theory deserve increased attention. These challenges include the need to look at 1) the role of the historical development of social production and exchange relationships on the characteristics of a region's economic structure, 2) the articulation of political and economic interests in promoting or constraining equitable development, 3) the importance of class, gender and race on development policy choice and its impacts, and 4) the limits of institutional reform within a given social/economic context. In elaborating upon these challenges we draw evidence primarily from Appalachia and the deep South. While similar arguments could be made for other areas of persistent rural poverty, our purpose is merely to illustrate the importance of these considerations for future research and policy development.

Role of History in Economic Structure: The current industrial structure—based on coal and manufacturing in Appalachia and plantation agriculture and manufacturing in the Black Belt and Delta, for example—does not require a large pool of skilled labor to keep production costs low. In these regions, technological change has enabled capital substitution for labor to increase productivity (Billings 1988). However, labor displacement has not been followed by aggressive investment in human resources and the pursuit of alternative economic strategies to promote full employment. Despite the emphasis given to retraining and job development programs for displaced workers by the *Commission on the Future of the South,* such programs do not appear to have generated the level of governmental response one might expect given the level of displacement caused by recent restructuring of the Southern economy in response to the internationalization of production (Gaventa, 1988). One explanation of this failure to mobilize community resources may lie in the failure to articulate the economic interests of a broader spectrum of society in development discussions. This also may explain the difficulty in winning broader support for poverty alleviation programs.

Political and Economic Interests: Are equity goals of development which include an emphasis on social production for human needs undermined by the forces for private concentration of economic power? A critical perspective would suggest that they are. Lack of broad-based democratic participation throughout the history of these regions has narrowed the development options resulting in a regional economy whose organization and development is based more on private capital accumulation than on broader social and economic development. Indeed, the low-wage job creation strategies, anti-union climate, and inadequate transfer payment levels for the poor suggest that human development needs have been subordinated to capital accumulation in development of the Delta, Black Belt and Appalachia. The present economic structure of the Delta and Black Belt is a direct result of a de facto industrial policy to utilize a large pool of low-skill, low-wage labor to keep costs low (Lyson, 1989). Ironically, cheap labor, an original regional advantage, has now turned

> . . . the low-wage job creation strategies, anti-union climate, and inadequate transfer payment levels for the poor suggest that human development needs have been subordinated to capital accumulation . . .

to a disadvantage, since much of the labor in these areas lacks the basic skills required to participate in the advanced industrial economy. Moreover, much of the employment gained in peripheral industries by the rural South during the 1970's has now moved offshore.

Class, Race, Gender: Where the social unit is narrowed by race, class, gender or ethnicity, ability to achieve equity goals in development may be constrained (Herrick and Kendleberger, 1983). In the Delta and Black Belt, for example, while one should not dwell on the role of racism in the economic structure, it is appropriate to recognize that discrimination and prejudice have resulted in a racial division of labor which is reinforced by shifts in the advanced industrial economy that adversely impact the low wage sector of the economy (Wilson, 1985). For example, Lichter (1989) has shown that blacks continue to experience twice the level of underemployment as whites in the nonmetropolitan South, and Falk and Lyson (1988) showed that the occupational composition of southern rural black employment was unchanged by the industrialization of the 1970's. A similar argument could be made with respect to class differences among whites in Appalachia. Thus, it is important to analyze the differential impact of economic policies on groups concentrated in low-skill, low-wage economic sectors and the implications for persistent poverty.

Institutional Reform: The institutional infrastructure which has grown out of conditions of unequal class and race relations reflects the efforts (conscious or unconscious) of the dominant class to retain economic and political control. As James (1988) has demonstrated, racial differences in enfranchisement in the South were closely articulated with local class structures typical of labor-intensive cotton agriculture. The interactions between these social relations and the economic structure have resulted over time in development policies which discourage broader ownership of the economic base, limit investment in new technologies which may increase distributional equity, and undervalue the human resource base. Recent efforts to address these problems through progressive development policy prescriptions, as articulated by the *Commission on the Future of the South,* may have limited impact on alleviation of persistent poverty unless the social and economic interactions which form the basis of the current institutional framework are altered to reflect broader social goals.[10] The ability of southern states to follow through on the Commission's recommendations could be further limited by the trend toward shifting responsibilities for anti-poverty programs from the federal government to the states. Since the financial ability to pay for such programs varies among states, being especially weak in much of the South, the region will require special assistance if the ''new federalism'' is not to result in a deepening of poverty (Deavers, et al, 1986).

Conclusion

Development policies focused on ameliorating inequitable distributional impacts appear to have had limited effect in persistent low income and high poverty counties. Most poverty alleviation programs have focused on job training and business and infrastructure development in an effort to create more employment opportunities for the rural poor. These approaches assume that the poor will benefit through 'trickle down' effects in the labor market. Although few systematic evaluations have been undertaken of the impact of these programs on poverty alleviation, most have recognized that tension between competing goals of economic viability and developmental equity limits the poverty alleviation impacts in both urban and rural areas.

By what criteria should these programs be measured? Katherine McKee has suggested three criteria by which to measure the poverty alleviation impact of economic development programs: 1) gains in stability and level of income for large numbers of people, 2) improved control over government policies and market forces which shape the economic conditions of the poor, and 3) empowerment of individuals, households and communities (McKee, 1989).

These criteria suggest that investments in human capital, social institutions and political democracy may have greater impacts on poverty reduction than direct investments in economic development. Thus, more attention should be given to the conceptual challenges of incorporating social and political considerations into development theory and practice if the continuing pattern of economic underdevelopment and poverty is to be redressed in persistent low income areas.

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[10] These policy prescriptions focus on the role of education and technology in increasing the global competitiveness of the work force. While these goals primarily serve the interests of current economic leaders, attention also is given to broader societal goals such as strengthening at-risk families, developing new leaders, and improving the performance of local governments (Southern Growth Policies Board, 1986).

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Rural People in Poverty: Persistent Versus Temporary Poverty

Peggy J. Ross and Elizabeth S. Morrissey*

After many years of neglect, the problem of rural poverty has re-entered the national public limelight. Highlighting the plight of the rural poor, a recent *Newsweek* feature story pointed out that the 9.1 million poor Americans who live outside the nation's metropolitan areas sharply belie the common public image of poverty as an urban problem, concentrated in inner-city ghettos (*Newsweek*, 1988). In another article on the working poor, *U. S. News and World Report* (1988) observed that national policymakers tend to overlook the working poor because so many are invisible—hidden in the hamlets and isolated countryside of rural America. The anecdotal information contained in these (and other) news media articles have, at least, heightened public awareness of the existence of rural poverty in the nation and some of the unique obstacles that the rural poor face.

Indisputably, not only is the poverty problem in rural America as or more severe than that in urban America, but urban-oriented antipoverty policy solutions often fail to serve the unique needs of the rural poor (Deavers, Hoppe and Ross, 1986, 1989; Duncan and Tickamyer, 1989; Hoppe and Bellamy, 1989). According to official poverty statistics, about one in every six rural Americans nationwide was poor in 1987 (U. S. Census Bureau, 1989). The poverty rate for rural

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Americans (16.9 percent) exceeded the rate for urban Americans (12.5 percent) nationwide by five percentage points and fell under two percentage points of reaching the intercity poverty rate (18.6 percent) (Hoppe and Bellamy, 1989). Furthermore, the rates for certain rural demographic groups—elderly, children, minorities, female-headed families—have remained substantially higher than the overall rural rate. For example, 45 percent of persons and 60 percent of children in single parent, female-headed families and 44 percent of blacks were poor in 1987 (Hoppe and Bellamy, 989).

Official poverty statistics as well as most poverty research fail to address an important dimension of the rural poverty problem—the dynamics of who moves in and out and how long they stay. During the 1960's, Michael Harrington acknowledged those Americans caught in the web of chronic poverty:

> The real explanation of why the poor are where they are is that they made the mistake of being born to the wrong parents, in the wrong section of the country, in the wrong industry, or in the wrong racial and ethnic group . . . Most of them would never even have had a chance to get out of the other America . . . the poor are caught in a vicious circle . . . in a culture of poverty (1962: 14-15).

In fact, the acceptance of Oscar Lewis's (1969) notion of a "culture of poverty" as a self-perpetuating way of life entrapping people into permanent poverty undergirded many of the War on Poverty programs and anti-poverty strategies.

Today, national attention is focused on the existence of an urban underclass, including a special subset of the urban poor who exhibit serious problems of chronic poverty, joblessness, welfare dependency, crime, drugs, and social breakdown (Ellwood, 1988; Sawhill, 1988; Wilson, 1987) which further underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of poverty. The recognition of an urban underclass has not only called attention to the problems of persistent poverty but to the adequacy of poverty policy to address them. In fact, national awareness of an urban underclass helped provide impetus for the 1988 welfare reform by calling attention to welfare dependency among the inner city poor.

Are the dynamics of poverty different among the poor who live outside urban areas? Does persistent poverty in rural areas differ fundamentally from persistent poverty in urban areas? Do the characteristics that differentiate the persistent poor and the temporary poor differ for the rural and urban poor? In this paper, we deal with these issues of long-term or persistent poverty versus short-term or temporary poverty among persons living in rural (nonmetropolitan) versus urban (metropolitan) settings.[1]

Certainly, understanding the dynamics of poverty is important from a policy perspective. The kinds of policies needed to address short-term poverty may be very different from the policies appropriate for persistently poor families. Furthermore, if, as is true in urban areas, the rural persistently poor are a distinct subset of the rural poor, then efficient targeting of resources depends on knowledge of those distinguishing characteristics.

Previous Research

Although hampered by the lack of longitudinal data and the complex challenges of defining and measuring poverty in a dynamic situation,[2] research on persistent poverty has tended to show that the persistent poor resemble the traditional images of hard-core poor, while the temporary poor resemble the nonpoor, except for the occurrence of a major life or life cycle event leading to poverty status (e.g., Bane and Ellwood, 1983; Coe, 1978; Duncan, 1984; Duncan and Morgan, 1980; Evans, 1983; Harrington, 1984; Hill, 1981; Holden et al., 1985; Levy, 1977; Plotnick, 1983; Rainwater, 1981). Divorce, loss of a spouse, loss of a job, involuntary residential moves, illness or disability, retirement, or growing old may cause someone to become poor. According to one estimate, nearly one-quarter of the U. S. population experienced occasional periods of poverty during the 1969-1978 decade, and one-tenth of all poor were poor at least 8 years of the 10 in the period (Duncan, 1984). Moreover, a disproportionate number of these persistent poor (over one-third) lived in rural areas.

In earlier work (Ross and Morrissey, 1986, 1987), we used selected data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)[3] to contrast two types of poverty among rural (nonmetro) people—persistent and temporary.[4] We found that a disproportionate share of both persistent and temporary poor lived in nonmetro areas during the 1978-1982 period; however, the persistent poor made up only about one-third of the nonmetro poor. We also found that the rural persistent poor exhibited the characteristics associated with pronounced poverty (older, minority members, undereducated, living in female-headed families), while the temporary poor were like the nonpoor in many ways, except many labor-force-age male family heads were unemployed blue-collar workers.

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[1] Nonmetropolitan, or synonomously rural, refers to persons living in counties that had no towns greater than 50,000 population, as classified as nonmetropolitan in 1983 by U.S. Bureau of Census.

[2] See Ross and Morrissey (1986) for a discussion of the definitional and measurement problems associated with research on the dynamics of poverty.

[3] The Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is a national longitudinal survey of 5,000 American families conducted annually since 1968 by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. PSID tracks the economic and social conditions of original households and new households formed by persons from the original survey. PSID's longitudinal perspective on the changing economic welfare of American families makes it a valuable data source for research on the dynamics of poverty.

[4] Hoppe (1988) used our findings to examine the policy needs of the persistent versus the temporary poor.

In this paper, we expand our previous analysis on the rural persistent and temporary poor to address two general questions. Are there metro-nonmetro differences in the extent of persistent and temporary poverty among the poor and among different demographic groups? Are there metro-nonmetro differences in the demographic, social and economic characteristics of persistent and temporary families, and how do these vary for female-headed versus male-headed families? We then interpret the results to answer a third question. What relevance do any identifiable differences between metro and nonmetro persistent and temporary poor have for formulating and directing policies and programs to better serve the rural poor?

Data and Definitions

Researchers using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) as well as other longitudinal data bases to analyze the dynamics of U. S. poverty have measured the dynamics of poverty status in several ways. The most common approach is the fixed time frame, which considers the duration of poverty over a period of years. Duncan (1984), for example, defined the persistent poor as those persons with family incomes inadequate to meet basic needs in 8 or more years in a 10 year period, and Levy's (1977) persistently poor were those who were poor in 5 years of a 7 year period. A second statistical approach is to use longitudinal data to model the level of income and then estimate the fraction of the population likely to be below the poverty line and for how long (Gottschalk, 1982). Bane and Ellwood (1983) tried modeling "spells of poverty" and calculating exit probabilities by year and distributions for the length of spells for new, completed, and uncompleted spells observed at a point in time.[5]

According to official poverty statistics, about one in every six rural Americans nationwide was poor in 1987.

Data

For the present analysis, we used data previously obtained from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), Survey Research Center, University of Michigan (see footnote 4 above). Survey Research Center analysts[6] generated a set of tables developed according to our specifications from the PSID computer files. These tables contained population estimates of selected demographic, family, income and employment characteristics of persons in the PSID sample by residence category and poverty status over a five year period, 1978-1982.[7] We specified measures to tap behavior and attributes in 1982, the last year of the five year period (or 1981 in the case of income and employment), and over the 5 year study period, 1978-1982. For example, the extent to which poverty status was constant over the study period was measured by calculating the ratio of 5 year total cash income to an estimate of 5 year basic income needs. Replications of the basic set of tables were also obtained for several demographic groups believed to represent different degrees of vulnerability to either persistent or temporary poverty: male family heads, female family heads, elderly persons, children, and labor-force-age persons 16 to 64 years old.

The tables contained frequencies and proportional counts based on the national expanded estimates for approximately 50 variables for all persons in the sample by four residence categories and four categories of poverty status—persistent poor, temporary poor, near poor and nonpoor. Raw cell counts were also generated to evaluate the stability of the estimates. We used the basic tables to collapse and organize data into meaningful presentations and to derive measures of central tendency, where indicated.

We acknowledge that the data, which were derived from a sample, are subject to sampling error. The large number of comparisons and the lack of direct access to the data files precluded the use of significance tests. However, to increase the stability of the estimates, we generally report estimates only when the number of raw observations in a sub-group (e.g., nonmetro persistent poor, metro elderly temporary poor) exceeded 30, and the number of raw observations for a cell exceeded 10.

Definitions

Definitions of many of the variables are self-explanatory; definitions of key variables are as follows:

Poverty: Having cash income less than the Census-estimated amount required for a family of a given size to meet its basic needs.

Persistent Poor: Persons living in families with cash income below the poverty level for 3 years or more in the 1978-1982 period.

Temporary Poor: Persons living in families with cash income below the poverty level for 1 or 2 years in the 1978-1982 period.

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[5] Rank and Hirschl (1988) used a similar method to model welfare exits among rural and urban welfare recipients.

[6] We acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Dr. Daniel Hill in developing the original tables from which the present analysis is based.

[7] At the time, 1982 was the most recent year for which the PSID data were available. We selected a five year time span for measuring the dynamics of poverty status (rather than a ten year span) to maximize the base number of cases available for residents living in rural/nonmetro areas. The time period included 2 to 3 years of economic recession in the country where the poverty rates in both metro and nonmetro areas jumped substantially. The extent to which these rates apply to other time periods are unknown, however, we believe that the distinguishing characteristics of the persistent and temporary poor may be generally the same, although the poverty rates will vary for different time periods.

Family: Persons living together who are related by blood, marriage, or permanence of living arrangement. Single persons living alone were classified as 1 person families.[8]

Head of Household: The man in husband/wife families or the person who is the major earner or who owns the home or pays the rent in non-nuclear families.[9]

Nonmetropolitan Residence: Living in counties that had no towns with populations greater than 50,000 as classified by the U. S. Bureau of Census in 1983.

Totally Rural Residence: Living in nonmetro counties (1983 Census-classified) that had no towns with populations greater than 10,000.

Other variables are defined as they are introduced in the next section.

Results

In the empirical analysis, we first examined the metro-nonmetro differences in the extent of poverty and extent of persistent poverty among the poor and among different demographic groups.

Extent of persistent and temporary poverty

A disproportionate share of both persistent and temporary poor lived in nonmetro areas (Table 1). Over 8 percent of nonmetro residents compared to 5 percent of metro residents were persistently poor, and 14 percent of nonmetro residents versus 9 percent of metro residents were temporarily poor during 1978-1982. Furthermore, nonmetro residents living in totally rural areas experienced the highest degrees of both persistent and temporary poverty.

Another indicator of the disproportionate share of persistent and temporary poor in nonmetro areas is the fraction of each poverty type in the various residence groups. For example, totally rural areas contained 12 percent of U. S. population but about one-fifth of the

Table 1. Persons by Poverty Status by Residence, 1978-1982.

	Residence[1]				
Poverty Status	Totally Rural	Other Nonmetro	All Nonmetro	Metro	U.S.
Total (000)	45,446	46,353	91,799	277,855	369,654
			—Percent—		
Persistent Poor[2]	10.1	6.6	8.4	5.1	5.9
(3 years)	(3.0)	(3.3)	(3.1)	(1.7)	(2.1)
(4 years)	(2.9)	(1.2)	(2.1)	(1.7)	(1.8)
(5 years)	(4.2)	(2.1)	(3.2)	(1.7)	(2.0)
Temporary Poor[3]	16.0	12.1	14.0	9.0	10.2
(1 year)	(10.9)	(8.6)	(9.8)	(6.4)	(7.3)
(2 years)	(5.1)	(3.5)	(4.2)	(2.6)	(2.9)
Nonpoor[4]	73.9	81.3	77.6	85.9	83.9
Total Poor (000)	11,880	8,678	22,558	39,094	59,652
Persistent Poor	38.8	35.5	37.4	36.2	36.5
(3 years)	(11.4)	(17.7)	(14.0)	(12.2)	(12.8)
(4 years)	(11.3)	(6.3)	(9.2)	(11.9)	(11.0)
(5 years)	(16.2)	(11.5)	(14.2)	(12.1)	(12.7)
Temporary Poor	61.1	64.5	62.6	63.9	63.5
(1 year)	(41.8)	(45.9)	(43.6)	(45.7)	(45.0)
(2 years)	(19.3)	(18.6)	(19.0)	(18.2)	(18.5)
Fraction of U.S. total who were:					
Persistent Poor	21.1	14.1	35.2	64.8	100.0
Temporary Poor	19.2	14.8	34.0	66.0	100.0
Nonpoor	10.8	12.2	23.0	77.0	100.0
Total Persons	12.3	12.5	24.8	75.2	100.0

[1] Totally rural residents lived in nonmetropolitan counties (1983 Census-classified) that had no towns greater than 10,000 population. Other nonmetropolitan residents lived in nonmetropolitan counties that had no towns greater than 50,000 population. Metro residents lived in counties classified as metropolitan.

[2] Persistently poor persons lived in families with incomes below poverty level for at least 3 years of the 5 year period, 1978-82.

[3] Temporarily poor persons lived in families with incomes below poverty level either 1 or 2 years of the 5 years, 1978-1982.

[4] Nonpoor persons lived in families with incomes above poverty level during all 5 years, 1978-1982.

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[8] In the PSID, the terms household and family are used interchangeably.

[9] This definition of household head differs from the standard self-assessment definition employed in U.S. Census Bureau surveys and may result in a smaller estimate of female-headed families.

persistent and temporary poor. Conversely, 75 percent of the nation's population but 65 percent of persistent and temporary poor resided in metro areas. Interestingly though, and despite the present concern about a permanent underclass developing in the nation's inner-cities, the share of the poor who were persistently poor was roughly the same (slightly over 35 percent) in both metro and nonmetro residence categories.

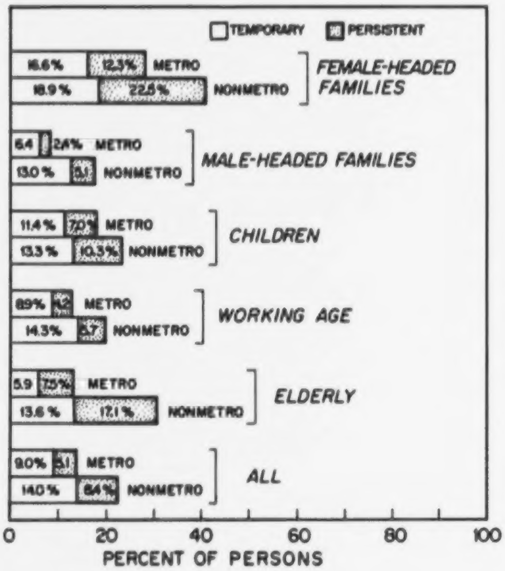
Do these metro-nonmetro patterns of persistent and temporary poverty apply to groups like different family types, children, working (labor force) age, and elderly? We elected to look at the working age, because of growing interest in the working poor and our previous findings about the predominance of working poor among the temporary poor.

Examining the extent of persistent and temporary poverty present in each of the selected groups, we found that, for all groups, poverty (combined rates of persistent plus temporary) over the five year period was greater in nonmetro than metro areas (Figure 1). However, compared with the respective metro or nonmetro rates, the poverty rates were lower among working age, people living in male-headed families, and the metro elderly and, conversely, higher among children, persons in female-headed families, and the nonmetro elderly.

We also found few metro-nonmetro differences in the extent of persistent versus temporary poverty existing among the poor in each of the groups, although persistent poverty was more prevalent in some groups and temporary poverty more prevalent in other groups than in the general population (Figure 2).[10] Compared to the overall metro or nonmetro rates, poor persons of working age and persons in male-headed families tended to experience temporary poverty to a greater degree, while the poor who were children or elderly and or lived in female-headed families experienced persistent poverty to a greater degree. Around three-fifths of metro and nonmetro elderly poor and two-fifths of metro and nonmetro children were persistently poor. Only in the case of the poor living in female-headed families were the nonmetro residents (58 percent) more prone to persistent poverty than their metro counterparts (45 percent). Given both research and public concerns about the influence of family type on persistent poverty, we further examined the extent of persistent versus temporary poverty among the age groups, controlling for family type. Among poor children, children living in female-headed families were much more apt to be persistently poor than those living in male-headed families. About three-quarters of both metro and nonmetro poor children in male-headed families experienced temporary rather than persistent poverty (Figure 3).

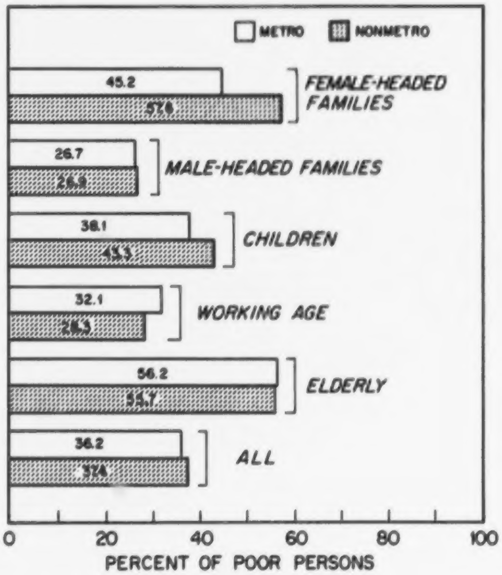
However, the metro-nonmetro pattern was different for poor children in female-headed families with an astounding 80 percent of nonmetro poor children persistently poor compared to less than half of metro poor children. These results are a little puzzling when compared to the nonmetro working age, of whom only about half were persistently poor. However, working age

Figure 1. Persistent and Temporary Poverty by Demographic Group by Residence.



Source: Panel Survey of Income Dynamics

Figure 2. Persistent Poverty Among the Poor by Demographic Group by Residence.



Source: Panel Survey of Income Dynamics persons and children apparently lived in different subsets of female-headed families. Nonmetro working age poor tended to live in smaller families than nonmetro poor children with over 10 percent living alone (in one-person families),[11] and under 30 percent living in families with 5 or more persons. On the other hand, half of the persistent poor children and 40 percent of temporary poor children lived in families of 5 or more persons.

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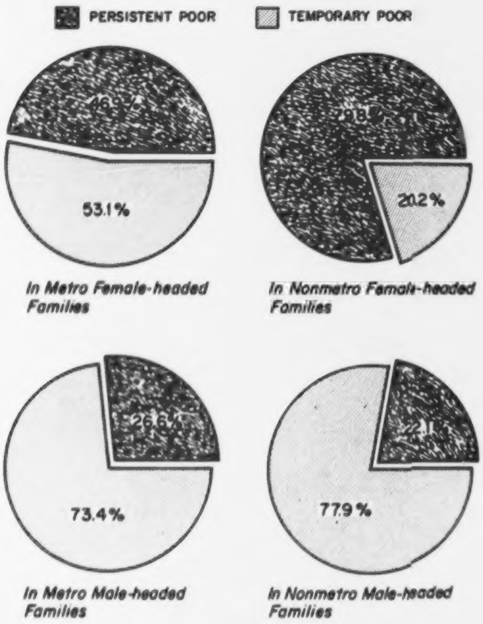
[10] Each bar in Figure 2 depicts the proportion of poor who were persistently poor, 1978-1982. The balance were temporarily poor.

Like poor children, the elderly poor in female-headed families were more apt to be persistently poor, while the elderly poor in male-headed families were more likely to be temporarily poor (Figure 4). Unlike poor children, metro and nonmetro elderly poor exhibited similar patterns when family type was held constant. However, the nonmetro elderly poor in female-headed families were slightly more inclined to persistent poverty and those in male-headed families slightly less inclined to temporary poverty than were their metro counterparts.

Among the working age poor, the metro-nonmetro patterns were the same, when family type was considered (Figure 5). Regardless of residence, the working age poor in male-headed families were predominantly temporarily poor (over 75 percent). Similarly, the majority of working age poor in female-headed families (metro and nonmetro) was temporarily poor, although the share of temporary poor among working age poor in female-headed families was slightly lower in nonmetro than metro areas.

Figure 3. Persistent and Temporary Poverty Among Poor Children by Family Type by Residence.



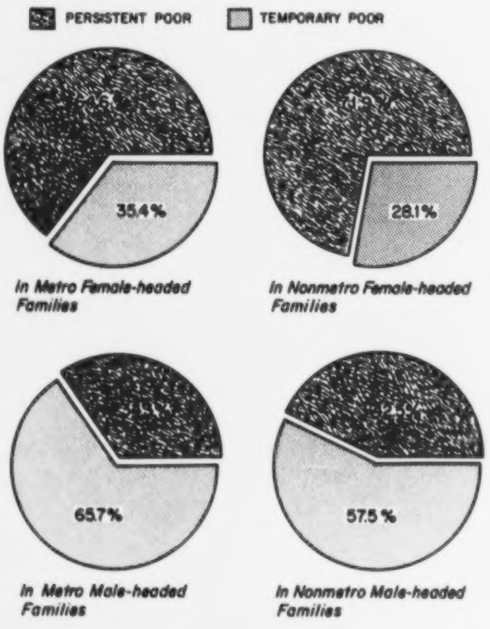
In Metro Female-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Female-headed Families*

In Metro Male-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Male-headed Families*

Source: Panel Survey of Income Dynamics

In summary, during the 5 year period, the extent of poverty—either persistent or temporary—was greater among nonmetro than metro people and in all cases

Figure 4. Persistent and Temporary Poverty Among Poor Elderly by Family Type by Residence.

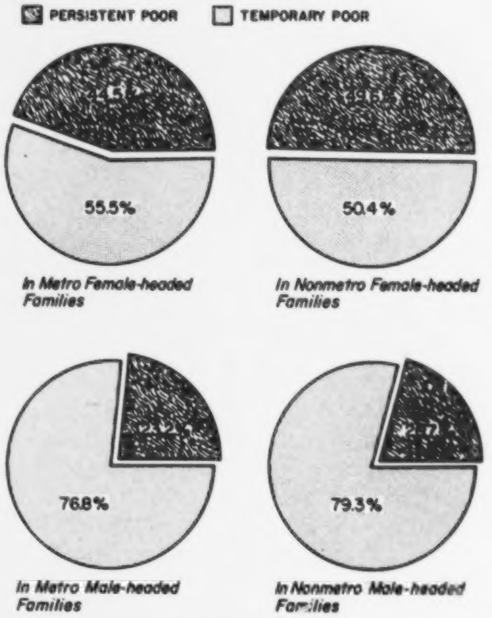


In Metro Female-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Female-headed Families*

In Metro Male-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Male-headed Families*

Source: Panel Survey of Income Dynamics

Figure 5. Persistent and Temporary Poverty Among Working Age Poor by Family Type by Residence.



In Metro Female-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Female-headed Families*

In Metro Male-headed Families — *In Nonmetro Male-headed Families*

Source: Panel Survey of Income Dynamics among nonmetro elderly, children, female-headed and male-headed family members, and working age adults than among their respective metro counterparts. Conversely, there were few metro-nonmetro differences in the extent to which poverty was persistent versus temporary among all poor and among poor in the various groups that we examined. One notable exception was nonmetro poor children in female-headed families who were substantially more prone to persistent poverty than metro poor children in female-headed families. Finally, the nonmetro elderly poor in both male and female-headed families were somewhat more inclined to persistent poverty than their metro counterparts.

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[11] As noted above, one-person households are treated as families in the PSID.

Characteristics of the persistent and temporary poor

Who are the persistent and temporary poor? Are the characteristics that distinguish the two poverty types the same in nonmetro and metro areas? We compared the demographic, income and employment characteristics of persistent and temporary poor families by residence and family type[12] to better understand the factors influencing the different types of poverty in metro and nonmetro areas.

The age and family type composition of poor persons varied considerably by poverty type and by residence (Table 2). The large majority of temporary poor persons lived in male-headed families, while the majority of persistent poor persons lived in female-headed families. And the dominance of male-headed families was more pronounced among the nonmetro temporary poor. The nonmetro poor exhibited some interesting patterns of age structure for different family types. Among the nonmetro persistent poor, those in female-headed families were predominantly (two-thirds) children or elderly, while those in male-headed families consisted primarily of elderly (about one-third) and working age adults (over half). Among the nonmetro temporary poor, over three-fifths were working age adults in both female and male-headed families. On the other hand, the age composition of the metro persistent and temporary poor were basically the same, with only minor variations in degree. Elderly made up under 10 percent of both persistent and temporary poor in metro male-headed families.

To make more detailed metro-nonmetro comparisons of persistent and temporary poor (reported below), we focused mainly on the characteristics of families and family heads.

Regional location. Regionally, the majority of nonmetro persistent poor lived in the South, and the majority of nonmetro temporary poor lived in the South or Midwest, while the metro poor tended to be more dispersed across the regions (Table 3). Nearly half of the nonmetro temporary poor male-headed families lived in the Midwest, but three-fifths of the persistent

Table 2. Age and Family Type of Persons by Poverty Status by Residence.

	Nonmetro		Metro		U.S.	
Item	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor
			—Number in Thousands[1]—			
All families	7,504	12,816	13,895	24,836	21,399	37,652
Female-headed	4,031	2,292	8,965	9,689	12,996	11,981
Male-headed	3,473	10,524	4,930	15,147	8,403	25,671
			—Percent of Persons—			
Family type						
All persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female-headed	53.7	17.9	64.5	39.0	60.7	31.8
Male-headed	46.3	82.1	35.5	61.0	39.3	68.2
Age						
All persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<16 years	24.5	18.9	24.6	22.3	24.5	21.1
16-64	43.2	65.8	59.4	70.2	53.7	68.7
65 and over	32.3	15.3	16.0	7.6	21.8	10.2
Female-headed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<16 years	30.6	13.5	26.6	28.0	27.9	25.2
16-64	35.3	63.1	53.7	62.0	48.0	62.2
65 and over	34.1	23.4	19.7	18.0	24.1	12.6
Male-headed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<16 years	17.3	20.1	20.7	18.6	19.3	19.2
16-64	52.4	66.4	69.7	75.4	62.6	71.7
65 and over	30.3	13.5	9.6	6.0	18.1	9.1

[1] Includes persons in family type for at least 3 of the 5 year period.

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[12] Family type generally refers to the type of family lived in for at least 3 of 5 years. However, when different characteristics are reported by family type, the data are based on sex of head in 1982.

Table 3. Regional Location of Families by Poverty Status by Residence by Family Type.

Item	Nonmetro Persistent Poor	Nonmetro Temporary Poor	Metro Persistent Poor	Metro Temporary Poor	U.S. Persistent Poor	U.S. Temporary Poor
			—Number in Thousands—			
All families	3,840	5,755	6,773	11,836	10,613	17,591
Female-headed	2,376	1,999	4,834	6,540	7,210	8,539
Male-headed	1,464	3,756	1,939	5,296	3,403	9,052
			—Percent of Families—			
Region						
All families						
Northeast	1.3	6.5	26.1	22.6	17.2	17.3
Midwest	32.2	39.4	23.4	32.1	26.6	34.5
South	63.7	46.1	39.0	25.7	48.0	32.4
West	2.8	7.4	10.2	19.6	7.6	15.6
Other[1]	—	.6	1.3	—	.6	.2
Female-headed						
Northeast	2.0	11.8	25.1	27.1	17.5	23.5
Midwest	30.8	23.7	25.1	33.5	27.0	31.2
South	65.0	52.2	38.9	22.1	47.5	29.2
West	2.2	10.2	9.1	17.3	6.9	15.7
Other[1]	—	2.1	1.8	—	1.1	.4
Male-headed						
Northeast	—	3.6	28.8	17.2	16.4	11.5
Midwest	34.6	47.7	18.9	30.5	25.6	37.6
South	61.6	42.8	39.2	30.1	48.9	35.4
West	3.8	5.9	13.1	22.3	9.1	15.5
Other[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Includes families in Alaska, Hawaii and overseas.

poor male-headed families lived in the South. Only a small share of nonmetro poor families were located in the Northeast, compared to about a quarter of metro poor families.

Demographics. The persistent and temporary poor families differed demographically in a number of ways, although the differences were not always the same among the metro and nonmetro poor (Table 4). Among the nonmetro poor, persistent poor families were predominantly female-headed, while temporary poor families were predominantly male-headed.[13] Among the metro poor, on the other hand, the majority of both persistent and temporary poor families were female-headed, with female-headed families more prevalent (71 percent) among the metro persistent poor than among any other group. The pattern for metro temporary families differs from the pattern for metro temporary persons (Table 2), where over 60 percent of metro temporary poor persons lived in male-headed families, compared to 45 percent of metro temporary poor families that were male-headed. This reflects the somewhat larger size of male-headed families, which we discuss below.

Family heads were predominantly elderly among the nonmetro persistent poor, and predominantly working age among the nonmetro temporary poor and both categories of metro poor. Over 80 percent of metro temporary poor family heads (male and female-headed), and nearly 80 percent of nonmetro temporary poor male-headed families were working age. Interestingly, we also found that metro temporary poor heads included substantially greater shares of younger heads (under age 35)—about 60 percent of heads in each of the metro temporary poor family types. In contrast, under 30 percent of nonmetro female heads were under age 35.

When we examined race of the poor family heads, we found a greater tendency for metro family heads to be black than for nonmetro family heads, and a greater tendency for persistent poor heads to be black than for temporary poor heads.

There were no clearcut patterns of family size among the poverty types or family types. About three-fifths of nonmetro female-headed (persistent and temporary poor) families consisted of persons living alone, and only a small proportion had five or more persons. When coupled with the family size data for children showing that around half of nonmetro persistent poor children lived in families with five or more persons, this suggests that nonmetro persistent poor children may be concentrated in a relatively few but relatively

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[13] Nonmetro male-headed families included larger shares of intact families than did metro male-headed families, particularly metro persistent poor families where only 45 percent of male-headed families had husband and wife present.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Families by Povery Status by Residence by Family Type

Item	Nonmetro Persistent Poor	Nonmetro Temporary Poor	Metro Persistent Poor	Metro Temporary Poor	U.S. Persistent Poor	U.S. Temporary Poor
			—Number in Thousands—			
All families	3,840	5,755	6,773	11,836	10,613	17,591
Female-headed	2,376	1,999	4,834	6,540	7,210	8,539
Male-headed	1,464	3,756	1,939	5,296	3,403	9,052
			—Percent of Families—			
Family type						
Female-headed	61.9	34.7	71.4	55.3	67.9	48.6
Male-headed	38.1	65.3	28.6	44.7	32.1	51.4
(Intact)[1]	(69.5)	(78.0)	(43.8)	(61.6)	(54.8)	(68.3)
Head's age, 1982						
All families						
16-64 years	45.1	73.9	67.7	86.8	59.5	82.6
(<35 years)	(26.4)	(35.8)	(37.9)	(58.3)	(33.7)	(50.9)
65+ years	54.9	26.1	32.3	13.2	40.5	17.4
Female-headed						
16-64 years	41.8	66.0	63.1	84.7	56.1	80.3
(<35 years)	(22.4)	(29.7)	(33.8)	(56.6)	(30.1)	(50.3)
65+ years	58.2	34.0	36.9	15.3	43.9	19.7
Male-headed						
16-64 years	50.6	78.1	79.0	89.5	66.8	84.7
(<35 years)	(33.0)	(39.0)	(47.9)	(60.5)	(41.5)	(51.6)
65+ years	49.4	21.9	21.0	10.5	33.2	15.3
Head's race, Black						
All families	32.0	14.4	46.2	26.2	41.4	22.3
Female-headed	36.0	20.8	46.3	30.0	42.9	27.8
Male-headed	28.0	11.0	45.8	21.6	38.2	17.2
Family size, 1982						
One person						
All families	49.1	32.8	48.2	39.1	48.5	37.1
Female-headed	58.1	60.0	47.9	40.5	51.3	45.1
Male-headed	34.5	18.3	49.0	37.4	42.8	25.9
Five or more						
All families	8.0	12.4	13.3	11.1	11.5	11.5
Female-headed	5.6	1.6	8.8	6.7	7.9	5.4
Male-headed	11.7	18.1	24.6	16.4	14.2	17.1
Head's education, 1982[2]						
High school graduates						
All families	18.4	47.1	30.2	58.0	25.9	54.5
Female-headed	22.2	49.0	27.9	55.7	26.0	54.1
Male-headed	12.4	46.1	36.1	60.8	25.8	54.8
			—Median Value—			
Years of education						
All families	10.4	11.7	10.7	12.3	10.5	12.2
Female-headed	10.4	11.8	10.7	12.1	10.7	12.1
Male-headed	10.0	11.7	10.8	12.5	10.3	12.2

[1] The share of male-headed families with husband and wife present.

[2] Includes family heads 16 years old and older.

large families. That under 20 percent of nonmetro temporary poor male-headed families were one-person families is not surprising, because over three-quarters of male-headed families were intact husband/wife families. Among the metro poverty types, about half of the persistent poor and 40 percent of the temporary poor families in the different family type categories consisted of one person. But, metro, persistently poor, male-headed families tended to live in larger families (5 or more persons) than their nonmetro counterparts.

The temporary poor family heads had more education than the persistent poor family heads, irrespective of residence. The median education, which may, in part, be a function of the younger age structure, was greater than 12 years for all categories of metro temporary poor. Low proportions of nonmetro persistent poor family heads were high school graduates, with only 12 percent of nonmetro persistent poor male heads having a high school diploma—less than half the percentage for metro persistent poor male heads.

In sum, persistent poor families and their heads (metro and nonmetro) exhibited many of the demographic traits traditionally associated with long-term deprivation, except the traits, in some cases, were different. Both the metro and nonmetro persistent poor families were predominantly female-headed and included sizeable shares of one-person families. The nonmetro persistent poor heads included larger shares of elderly, less educated, and fewer blacks than the metro persistent poor heads. On the other hand, the nonmetro temporary poor families and their heads, while not totally different from their metro counterparts, differed in some respects. They were more prone to be male-headed, elderly, and have slightly less education, while the metro temporary poor heads included distinctly larger proportions of younger heads. Generally, the metro and nonmetro temporary poor were more like each other, than they were like the persistent poor.

Income. The more pronounced economic poverty existing among metro and nonmetro persistent poor families compared to temporary poor families is reflected in lower incomes and greater reliance on transfer income rather than earnings[14] (Table 5). Although average 1981 family incomes were lowest among the

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[14] Family income consists of income contributed by the family head, spouse (if present), and other family members.

Table 5. Income Characteristics of Families by Poverty Status by Residence of Family Type.

	Nonmetro		Metro		U.S.	
Item	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor
			—Number in Thousands—			
All families	3,840	5,755	6,773	11,836	10,613	17,591
Female-headed	2,376	1,999	4,834	6,540	7,210	8,539
Male-headed	1,464	3,756	1,939	5,296	3,403	9,052
			—Dollars—			
Mean family income, 1981						
All families	$4,368	$10,856	$45,322	$10,197	$4,977	$10,412
Female-headed	3,963	7,283	5,264	8,267	4,835	8,036
Male-headed	5,025	12,757	5,496	12,580	5,278	12,654
Receipt of family income, 1981, from			—Percent of Families—			
Earnings						
All families	32.6	74.6	44.3	75.7	40.0	75.4
Female-headed	22.7	58.0	35.3	69.7	31.2	67.0
Male-headed	48.5	83.4	66.6	83.2	58.8	83.3
Contributory transfers[2]						
All families	63.0	45.7	45.7	38.6	52.0	40.9
Female-headed	66.5	60.9	49.5	39.9	55.1	44.8
Male-headed	57.2	37.6	36.4	37.0	45.4	37.2
Noncontributory transfers[3]						
All families	58.6	31.0	66.2	34.3	63.4	33.3
Female-headed	61.2	61.7	71.6	42.8	68.2	47.2
Male-headed	54.3	14.7	52.7	23.9	53.4	20.1
Receipt of family income, 1978-1982, from:						
Earnings						
All families	57.6	88.0	74.5	92.6	68.4	91.1
Female-headed	42.3	81.6	71.1	90.2	63.0	88.2
Male-headed	75.6	91.5	82.9	95.5	79.7	93.8
Transfers, (over half)[1]						
All families	79.7	34.8	77.2	30.8	78.1	32.1
Female-headed	89.6	47.1	84.2	39.3	85.9	41.1
Male-headed	64.0	28.1	59.7	20.2	61.5	23.5

[1] Includes non-taxable income from: Aid to Families with Dependent Children; Social Security; Supplemental Security Income; other welfare; retirement, annuities, and pensions, Unemployment Compensation; workers' compensation and child support.

[2] Includes income from: Social Security; Unemployment Compensation; workers' compensation, retirement, pensions and annuities.

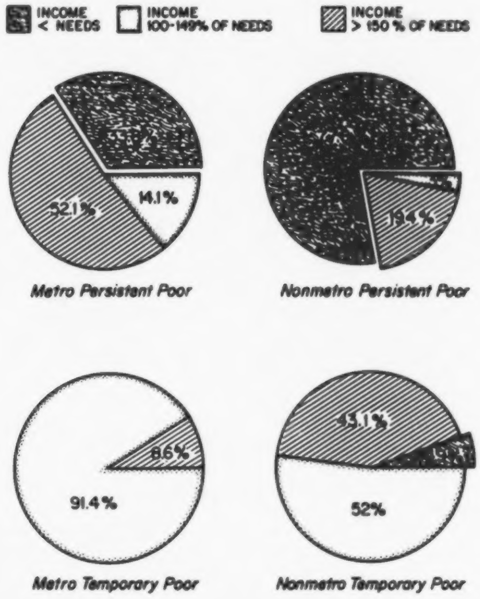
[3] Includes income from Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps and other welfare.

female-headed families, gaps between persistent and temporary poor family incomes were about the same across the family types in metro and nonmetro areas.

With some exceptions, such as metro male-headed persistent poor families, the general pattern for persistent poor families to rely more on transfer payment income and for temporary poor families to rely on earnings, prevailed when family income was examined for one year. The best indicator of reliance on welfare (public assistance) is the proportion of families receiving noncontributory transfer income, which excludes social security. One-half to over 60 percent of the persistent poor families and the nonmetro temporary poor female-headed families received some form of welfare and or food stamps in 1981.

Relative to the nonmetro persistent poor families, larger shares of the metro and nonmetro temporary poor families and the metro persistent poor received some family income from earnings over the five year period. There was less reliance on earnings income among the nonmetro persistent poor families, despite three-fourths of nonmetro persistent poor male headed families who had earnings income during the period. The increased chances of multiple earners in the male-headed families may be a contributing factor. Substantial proportions of metro and nonmetro persistent poor families received over half their five-year family income from transfer income, including public assistance (welfare), and social security income. In contrast, smaller shares of temporary poor families relied on transfer income to a large extent.

Figure 6. Constancy of Poverty-Level Income, 1978-1982, by Poverty Status, by Residence. Percent persons by ratio of 5-year family income to 5-year needs.



In short, differences in family income and reliance on various sources of income were greater between poverty types than they were between metro and nonmetro residence categories. However, when we examined the constancy of poverty-level status over the five year period, we found some sharp metro-nonmetro differences[15] (Figure 6). Over 75 percent of nonmetro persistent poor persons lived in families that had poverty level income over the entire five year period, compared to 34 percent of metro persistent poor persons. Conversely, over 90 percent of metro temporary poor persons lived in families whose family income was in excess of 150 percent of poverty level income over the entire five year period in contrast to about half of nonmetro temporary poor persons. These findings suggest a much greater income fluctuation among the metro than the nonmetro population.

Employment. The employment patterns among the metro and nonmetro families (coupled with the demographic findings) help explain persistent versus temporary poverty status (Table 6). In spite of minor residence differences, temporary poor families in both metro and nonmetro areas exhibited more attachment to the work force than their persistent poor counterparts. For example, they had, on average, more workers in the family and smaller shares of families with no working members than persistent poor families, although there were some variations by family type.

The extent of employment among working age heads may be a better indicator of attachment to the work force, since it adjusts for the extent of elderly in the populations. Temporary poor family heads in both metro and nonmetro areas were much more apt to have worked (any hours) during 1981 than their persistent poor counterparts, but slightly lower percentages—10 to 15 percentage points—of metro than nonmetro family heads (persistent and temporary) worked during the year. When family type is considered, male working age heads showed much greater attachment to work than female working age heads, although metro male heads were more likely to have not worked during 1981 than were nonmetro male heads. They also were less likely to have worked full-time than their nonmetro counterparts—45 versus 60 percent.

The types of jobs held by employed family heads differed by poverty type, family type and residence. Blue collar workers were more prevalent among temporary poor male heads, although those in metro areas included a larger share of white collar workers than in nonmetro areas. Over half of the nonmetro persistent poor male heads were farmers or farm managers, while metro persistent poor male heads were more evenly

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[15] Data showing the ratio of five year family income to basic income needs (poverty thresholds for families of different sizes) were unavailable for families, so we examined the distribution of persons in different ratio categories.

Table 6. Employment Characteristics of Families by Poverty Status by Residence by Family Type.

	Nonmetro		Metro		U.S.	
Item	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor	Persistent Poor	Temporary Poor
			—Number in Thousands—			
All families	3,840	5,755	6,773	11,836	10,613	17,591
Female-headed	2,376	1,999	4,834	6,540	7,210	8,539
Male-headed	1,464	3,756	1,939	5,296	3,403	9,052
			—Dollars—			
Number of workers per family			—Mean Value—			
All families	.4	1.0	.6	.9	.5	1.0
Female-headed	.3	.7	.5	.8	.4	.8
Male-headed	.6	1.2	.7	1.1	.7	1.1
No workers in family			—Percent of Families—			
All families	67.2	30.0	57.4	24.7	61.1	26.5
Female-headed	77.2	42.0	64.7	30.3	68.9	33.1
Male-headed	52.0	23.7	39.0	17.8	44.6	22.8
With working age heads						
All families	45.1	73.9	67.7	86.8	59.5	82.6
Female-headed	41.8	66.0	63.1	84.7	56.1	80.3
Male-headed	50.6	78.1	79.0	89.5	66.8	84.7
Annual hours worked, 1981[1]			—Percent of Working Age Heads—			
All families	1,733	4,252	4,582	10,275	6,315	14,527
0	33.3	9.2	49.0	19.4	44.7	16.4
1-1152	36.6	25.2	29.0	29.7	31.1	28.4
1153-1690	9.7	11.7	7.0	13.7	7.8	13.1
1691 +	20.4	53.9	15.0	37.2	16.4	42.1
Female-headed	992	1,320	3,050	5,537	4,042	6,857
0	55.3	22.9	59.1	28.2	58.2	27.2
1-1152	28.7	38.6	25.0	28.1	26.0	30.1
1153-1690	9.2	11.3	7.4	13.0	7.8	12.7
1691 +	6.8	27.2	8.5	30.7	8.0	30.0
Male-headed	741	2,932	1,532	4,738	2,273	6,857
0	3.8	3.0	29.0	9.0	20.8	6.8
1-1152	47.2	19.2	37.1	31.5	40.4	26.8
1153-1690	10.4	11.9	6.1	14.6	7.5	13.5
1691 +	38.6	65.9	27.8	44.9	31.3	52.9
Head's Occupation, 1981[2]			—Percent of Employed Heads—			
All families	710	2,981	1,459	5,968	2,169	8,949
White collar	6.5	21.3	24.5	46.5	18.6	38.1
Blue collar	25.8	48.7	21.2	30.2	22.8	36.3
Farming	33.3	17.8	6.7	1.5	15.4	7.0
Service	34.4	12.2	47.6	21.8	43.2	18.6
Female-headed	276	694	695	2,986	971	3,680
White collar	16.7	36.5	28.2	53.4	25.0	50.2
Blue collar	21.0	34.5	3.3	9.6	8.3	14.3
Farming	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Service	62.3	29.0	68.5	37.0	66.7	35.5
Male-headed	434	2,287	764	2,982	1,198	5,269
White collar	0.0	16.7	21.2	39.5	13.5	29.6
Blue collar	28.8	53.0	37.6	50.8	34.4	51.7
Farming	54.6	23.2	12.7	3.2	27.9	11.9
Service	16.6	7.1	28.5	6.5	24.2	6.8

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[1] Zero category includes unemployed heads and heads not in the labor force.

[2] Excludes heads who are unemployed, not in labor force, and for whom there was no information.

distributed among white collar, blue collar and service occupations.

Among female heads, the majority of metro temporary poor were employed in white collar jobs (likely clerical, and traditional female jobs), and nonmetro temporary poor were fairly evenly distributed among white collar, blue collar and service jobs. The persistent poor employed female heads (metro and nonmetro) tended to work in service jobs (including household workers) although more metro than nonmetro female heads worked in white collar jobs.

In summary, we found more poverty among nonmetro residents and nonmetro demographic groups than their metro counterparts, but few metro-nonmetro differences in the extent to which poverty was persistent versus temporary among all poor and among poor in the various demographic groups. Over two-thirds of overall poverty in both metro and nonmetro areas was temporary during the 5 year period. In comparison to these national rates and regardless of residence, the poor elderly, children, and persons in female-headed families were more prone to persistent poverty, while poor working age and persons in male-headed families were more inclined to temporary poverty. One notable exception was nonmetro poor children in female-headed families who were substantially more prone to persistent poverty than metro poor children in female-headed families.

When we compared the characteristics of the persistent and temporary poor families by residence, we found more differences between the persistent and temporary poor than between the metro and nonmetro persistent and temporary poor. And the metro-nometro differences that did exist were often a matter of degree or variations by family type. The persistent poor exhibited the characteristics usually associated with pronounced poverty—families whose heads were disproportionately female, black, lacked a high school education, relied heavily on public assistance for income, and had low levels of participation in the work force. Unlike the metro persistent poor, however, nonmetro persistent poor families tended to have more elderly heads and to have below poverty level income during the entire five year period.

Compared to the persistent poor, the temporary poor families were more likely to be male-headed, often intact, with family heads who were high school graduates or more and strongly attached to the work force. While alike in many ways, the metro and nonmetro temporary poor families differed in some respects. The metro temporary poor male heads were younger than the nonmetro temporary poor heads. Occupationally, the nonmetro employed male heads were more often blue collar workers, while the metro employed male heads tended to work in either blue collar or white collar jobs. The metro employed female heads tended to work in service or white collar jobs, and their nonmetro female counterparts were concentrated in service jobs. We believe that personal and family disruptions, and, particularly, unemployment often lead to periods of temporary poverty.

Policy Implications

These results suggest a need for a different mix of programs and policies to help ameliorate the problems of persistent and temporary poverty. In our judgement, no single strategy will address the complex problems of poverty, whether it be long or short-term, in all areas of the country. Some programs may benefit both the long-term or short-term poor, and others are better suited to serve either poverty type. Furthermore, depending on the concentration of different poverty types and the economic and social conditions existing in various geographic areas, different states and local communities may need to emphasize different sets of strategies.

We believe, first, that employment is the primary route out of poverty for many poor. Thus, programs that emphasize improving the employability of the poor and opening up better employment opportunities—creating steady jobs that pay livable wages—will help many poor. Employable persistent poor, many of whom lack sufficient education or job skills to function successfully in an increasingly complex, technologically-driven workplace, need education and job training to provide basic educational skills that will help them find and maintain jobs. (Many temporary poor who have become unemployed or displaced workers may also need job training or retraining programs to help them relocate to different jobs). The Family Support Act of 1988 that restructured the AFDC program emphasizes education and job training and extends income assistance to intact families with unemployed fathers provided they meet certain work-related requirements may especially benefit the nonmetro poor. Many of the states where the nonmetro poor are concentrated have not previously offered AFDC benefits to unemployed parents. Persistent poor children also need more special educational programs and services through the public school systems to help counteract the effects of poverty lifestyles and increase their chances of breaking the cycle of poverty.

> Improved employability alone is insufficient without programs to assure that jobs, first are available and second, provide steady employment with above-poverty earnings.

Improved employability alone is insufficient without programs to assure that jobs, first, are available, and second, that they provide steady employment and above poverty earnings. Macroeconomic policies that strengthen the economy and keep the employment rate up will eliminate much temporary poverty. Even when improved economic performance brings unemployment down nationally, not all areas of the country will necessarily benefit. During the recession of the early 1980's, nonmetro areas, particularly those hard-hit by the farm crisis and industrial restructuring of the manufacturing sector, were very slow to recover. Hoppe (1988:16) observes:

> Nonmetro economies must be strengthened to reduce future temporary poverty and to prevent temporary poverty from turning into the persistent poverty existing in depressed areas. Strengthening nonmetro economies is a complex task that involves macroeconomic policy and foreign trade, as well as more traditional rural development programs involving efforts to diversify local economies, expand business activity, or improve local human capital.

Pending policy changes such as raising the minimum wage would benefit those working poor who may be employed in jobs paying below poverty wages.

A mix of programs needs to include programs to take account of some of the fundamental issues underlying persistent poverty status: issues pertaining to family structure and stability. These include providing adequate child care for working parents, steps to decrease incidence of teenage pregnancies, programs to assure access to adequate health care apart from welfare recipiency, and ways to address the widespread problems of family instability related to long-term welfare dependency and a host of associated problems.

Anti-poverty policies must also take account of the elderly and unemployable, including the disabled, by providing for on-going cash assistance and access to adequate social services. As shown here, elderly are disproportionately represented among the rural poor. Establishing a national minimum SSI payment that would bring all the nation's elderly poor above the poverty line would go a long way in reducing poverty among the elderly. Elderly poor, particularly those in rural areas, need specialized social and health services and adequate housing.

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Down South: The Inferior Country?

William Howarth*

Whenever I go South, my feet feel welcome but my head keeps looking around for the deportation notice. I am an outsider there, with strong if not defiant Yankee roots. I grew up in Lincoln's hometown, Springfield, Illinois, and my first Southern trip was in 1957 to Washington, D.C. with a high school history class. On the grounds of the national Capitol we spied a pair of water fountains marked "White" and "Colored." History came home to me that day, for I had known racism at home, but mostly in its private, sneaky forms. Springfield lay smack on the Mason-Dixon line, settled by families of both Northern and Southern origin. My grandfather reflected this schism, having passed in one generation from Alabama to Illinois. To the end of his days he was a fierce Republican who also loved his biscuits and gravy.

I reinforced these nominal Southern ties in the early 1960s with four years of graduate study at the University of Virginia. I went there hoping to have long talks with Mr. Faulkner, but he sensibly deceased just before my arrival. He never saw how drastically the South soon changed, as schools integrated and poll taxes fell after a Texan came to the White House. Living amid magnolias and dogwood, I stubbornly focused on the

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New England of Emerson and Thoreau, but several fine teachers also opened me to the intricacies of Southern life and culture. Since then I have tried to foster my Southern bonds, especially as the region struggled to gain broader cultural recognition.

That struggle is ironic, in view of the mass of distinguished Southern poetry, fiction, drama, and essays that have spilled forth since the Civil War and evolved into mainstream American writing. At Princeton I lecture to several hundred freshmen on "Major American Writers," nearly half of whom are Southern: Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, William Faulkner, Alice Walker—and I could add the marginal associations of Willa Cather, Virginia-born, or Stephen Crane, who set *The Red Badge of Courage* in Virginia. Among American literature surveys, this Southern dominance is probably typical. Asked to defend it, I would turn to Walker Percy: "Why has the South produced so many good writers? Because we got beat."

If success has many friends, failure still tells the better story, along with its sisters disaster and villainy. One of America's best and most enduring stories is of the beaten South, dragged from a place of high fortune down into ruination and stagnancy. That tale repeats the central legends of Western culture, of the expulsion from Paradise and the collapse of dynastic families. In that light Southern history reads as a universal allegory, for it describes how nations and persons pass through complex cycles of fluctuation, seeing their lives rise up and plunge down.

People speak of going "up" North and "down" South, without reflecting much on those locutions. They probably derive from printed maps, with their up, down, and sideways dimensions. We tend to see the world that way, because we walk erect and look to the horizon. But a geographer sees the compass as lines of global rotation: with East and West marking the sun's path, North and South lie to the left or right. Draw a map with text and we instantly orient it for reading: up-down and left-right, This habitual convention also fosters a vertical scale of values. Notice how South always appears at the bottom? Height, loft, ascendancy thus all lie to the North—and that means the South fell because of its unfortunate geographical inferiority.

This notion seems absurd, until we begin to relate Southern history to its geography. Not everyone agrees on just what and where "The South" is. In *The Nine Nations of North America* (1981) Joel Garreau writes that the South is more of an emotion than a region. Even the physical area is a matter of dispute, defined by experts as consisting of between 9 and 17 states, not all of which fly the Stars and Bars or whistle Dixie. The South is and always has been more than a soft, susurrant dialect or a reverence for Jefferson Davis. More Confederate sympathizers lived in Illinois than the Ozarks, but today that part of Missouri-Arkansas calls itself Southern.

Emotions about the South seem to focus on a sense of place. Listen to environmental historian Albert Cowdrey define this attitude:

> Besides being a subculture, a web of traditions, or a sequence of events, the historical South is a place, the life that is lived there linked beyond *separation* to a certain ridge, a certain river, a certain quality of days in summer. Its artists have affirmed what all southerners, including the numerous *separated* brethren, know in their bones—there is no life *apart* from place, and no place is exactly like any other anywhere.

The words I emphasized all suggest that separation and dislocation are fundamental to the Southern sense of "home." The country of the South is a place that Southerners love and hate with equal amounts of fervor. Consider this fictional conversation, at the end of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), between two students at Harvard University. Quentin from Mississippi and Shreve from Alberta have sat up many nights reconstructing a large chunk of the Southern past, real and imagined. Finally Shreve says:

> "Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?"
>
> "I don't hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I don't hate it," he said.
>
> I don't hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; I don't. I don't! I don't hate it! I don't hate it!

In that feverish denial we hear exactly how divided Quentin is, and the heat of his passion, rising in cold Northern air, suggests how much a Southerner must identify his home through separation, disavowal and contradiction.

The land itself never welcomed settlers, for the South consists of a low sandy coast, rising to piedmont uplands, and then to the Appalachian mountains. For a small geographical area, the South possesses an exceptional diversity. With few deep harbors or navigable rivers, the region was difficult to penetrate or explore. William Bartram, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, wandered in the Southeast for several years during the Revolution, and in this remote country he found whole new species of plants and animals, described in his famous *Travels* (1791). Settlement came slowly to the South, and farming was hard: the coast was swampy, the uplands densely forested, the mountains rough and

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thinly soiled. Appalachia remains the stony heart of the South, a maze of hogback ridges and smoky hollows where few roads have ever entered.

The three regions grew up as worlds apart, not strongly tied by routes of commerce—unlike the North, where population spread rapidly across the flat, fertile prairies or gathered around rapidly-expanding cities. The South's only major asset was its warm, moist climate, which supported a growing season of more than 200 frost-free days. Thus wherever families could drain swamps or clear forest, they plowed fields and planted rice, tobacco, or cotton. Cotton was the big cash crop but required intensive labor, since the plants ripen over long intervals. To make profits farmers had to establish huge plantations and work them with a cheap labor source, imported African slaves. Frederick Olmstead first defined this plantation ecology in *Cotton Kingdom* (1861), a massive study based on fourteen months of travel and over five hundred interviews.

Nothing in the *land* dictated slavery; the land just responded to the pressures of money and class—and the rest of the story followed. Around the plantations developed a strong vertical class system, a few white rulers dominating a vast black peasantry. The paradox of Southern history is that this diverse region developed such a rigidly uniform society. The South grew rich but also stagnant, for its culture was stable and traditional, slow to accept innovation and generally hostile to ethnic or religious diversity. Fewer newspapers, theaters, or schools developed in the South, in sharp contrast to the lively variety of Northern states.

That was the ante-bellum South; it lost billions in capital after Emancipation and military occupation, then steadily declined in wealth and power for the next seventy years. The image of a stagnant, depressed South in the 1920s-30s is familiar to readers of Faulkner or Erskine Caldwell, and that image of weathered shacks and red dirt roads has dominated many later writers. Today new voices such as Josephine Humphries, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Bruce Hornsby are depicting a New South, which began to rebound after World War II and accelerated in the 1960s, following the much-dreaded federal mandates that gave education, public access, and voting rights to black citizens. Some historians have compared this recovery to the post-war transformation of Germany and Japan, which leads us to imagine how South Africa might prosper by rejecting its racist past.

Today the Southern economy has evolved from agriculture into a diverse mix of industry and services. Cotton has gone west, migrating from Texas to California. For every one dollar of Southern income now generated by farms, eight dollars come from factories. And this manufacturing does not concentrate in large cities, as in the North, but spreads among many towns of less than 10,000 population. In the last decade 10 million new jobs have been created, producing large population increases, especially among blacks who are returning from the Northern cities of New York, Chicago, and Detroit, where they fled in the 1940s.

The New South is no longer news (that idea has been around a long while), yet most Southern writers are still not telling its story. Usually success has many authors, and failure none; but the South has inverted that wisdom. Little in its history has prepared the region to enjoy success; its collective memory seems to fear prosperity as the portent of yet another fall. A conservative heritage also prefers to repeat old stories and deny change, even after it has undeniably come. A popular 1968 song about America's doomed effort in Vietnam follows a Southern motif, "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." And so the Southern voice intones its familiar litany of failure: Never mind our boom towns of Atlanta and Charlotte, let us regard the slump in offshore oil, the shuttered banks in Texas, the public disgrace of our television evangelists.

Nothing in the land dictated slavery;
the land just responded to the pressures
of money and class—
and the rest of the story followed.

This tendency to invert fortunes, cast them upside down and deny improvement, is especially characteristic of Southern intellectuals. Nashville in the 1930s was home to the so-called Fugitive group at Vanderbilt University, agrarians who attacked industrial society and denied that "material production" was important for their region, despite a century of poverty and illiteracy in the Tennessee Valley. A more recent version of that argument was offered by John Egerton in *The Americanization of Dixie* (1974), his eloquent attack on the spread of Yankee culture, in the form of McDonald's golden arches rising along Southern highways. A similar argument has been raised by Richard Current, in his *Northernizing the South* (1983). But Egerton's subtitle, The Southernization of America, reminds us that plenty of Colonel Sanders, Holiday Inns, and 7-11 stores, all Southern franchises, now line Northern roads. The real issue is whether or not the South, now grown more urban and affluent, less overtly racist, will accept that new identity without seeing it as "Yankee." Northern states, after all, have never been immune to poverty and racism. Times may have changed, but Southerners are still living in the same country.

Is the South, then, an "inferior" country? The classic liberal analysis of its history holds that the old South was inferior because its nineteenth-century economy was too rigid, not responsive to its geographic diversity. The regions remained separate, the races segregated, the classes static, and the culture stagnant.

The new South, it would seem, is rising toward a greater degree of parity. Today its regions are linked by transportation and communication, integration of public facilities is a fact of life, and the economy has developed more effectively around dynamic, industrial sources. And what of Southern culture? Developments there directly reflect this evolution, for Southern literature, music, art, and film, have moved beyond their regional origins to assume the status of global recognition. Faulkner, the blues, *The Color Purple,* all exemplify America to international audiences, creating a forceful statement of our cultural diversity.

How and why did this happen? Because Southern artists have long formed a bitter yet loyal opposition to their homeland. Consider two early writers who would seem to be total opposites, black and white: Frederick Douglass and Edgar Allan Poe. Both men stood apart, lived as alienated outcasts far from home. Like Faulkner's Quentin, they were exiles and pariahs, devoted to subversive and deceptive strategies in their writing. Poe built a whole career around the theme of duplicity, advanced by his divided, doubled souls who insist that "truth" is evasive. Douglass saw that slaves breathed an atmosphere of constant mendacity, forced always to lie in order to protect themselves. Under those circumstances, he observed, the songs of slaves could not be happy, as whites believed, but only express an abiding sense of sorrow.

Poe and Douglass established that writing in the South would have a counter-culture status, producing a literature of shadows, lies, and divisive contradictions. In the twentieth-century we often call this tradition "Southern Gothic," recalling the horrific, sensational thrillers where Frankenstein and Dracula rule the night. Violence rules the worlds of William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, and Carson McCullers, often in its most grotesque forms. Their works are populated with idiots, maniacs, and deviates of every stripe, for the aim is to denounce conventions, especially the social codes and taboos that stultified earlier Southern life. Yet these writers also have many positive themes, expressing love and positive bonding. Often their careers evolve through two stages of development, from Rebellion, the search for a native voice, to Affirmation, the discovery of a regional place.

Until recent years this division was mainly racial, reflecting the fact that whites held the power and blacks occupied a lowly social "place," rarely possessing their own land. Lacking material goods, black culture became richly oral, as artists sought through song, slang, and speech to create an alternate form of English, converting the adopted tongue into an empowering voice—what Zora Neale Hurston calls "a Negro way of saying" in her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942). Early writers tended to stress oral speech, as with Booker T. Washington, whose *Up From Slavery* (1901) is mainly a collection of public addresses, arranged for verbal rather than visual effect, as monologues instead of scenes. In the later works of Richard Wright, characters learn to speak for an innate self, not as others would have them say.

Many black writers since the 1950s have developed a stylized prose eloquence, relying heavily on musical rhythms. Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Malcolm X, and Leroi Jones all derived their rhetoric from song, that pattern of "call and response" that began in Southern fields, rose to the pulpit and platform, and finally came to dominate black music. Jazz and blues, with their emphasis on freeform improvisation and a sweet-mournful sound, were forms of music that endlessly recreated song. When translated into language, that style moved black artists far beyond the race's old illiteracy, opening and loosening the American language for all.

Early Southern white writers responded to their country mainly as a visual space, by memorializing scenes of a regional world, and the Mississippi Delta was one of their central locations. For Mark Twain, the river and its steamboat pilots provided him with a fundamental education, giving him that sense of place that taught him to write. In *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) he recalled: "The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told its mind to me without reserve." For him the ever-moving, restless river was both language and story; learning it, he also learned the principle of movement and timing that allowed him to find his tales rather than just invent them.

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The career of William Faulkner expressed a similar devotion to place, for fourteen of his novels position Southern history in a single Mississippi county he called Yoknapatawpha. In 1935 he drew a map of this domain, inscribed "William Faulkner, Sole Owner & Proprietor." Fashioned after his home in Oxford, Mississippi, Yoknapatawpha is a place where the layers of time lie close to the surface. The country ranges from upland mountains and big woods, land once held by Indians, to the lowland Delta, where along the big river's shores lie former plantations. In Faulkner's world tragedy stems from the curse of property, a concept that gave land and home its social status, while truth rises from a mythic sense of place, that intense memory of space, heat, and light that shapes a regional culture.

So the stream of Southern art has flowed, divided between the bitter, denunciatory tradition of voice and the affectionate, nostalgic tradition of place. Will it remain so as stories begin to rise from the New South? Most of the writers I have described are male, but since 1950 postmodern Southern literature has been dominated by women. Perhaps the most hopeful phrase in recent Southern writing appears in Flannery O'Connor's' story title, "Everything That Rises Must Converge." In the works of O'Connor, Lillian Hellman, Caroline Gordon, Katherine Anne Porter, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou, and Alice Walker, woman has clearly become a rising force in the South, winning large audiences to fresh standards of artistry. In rising to the status of respected voices, these artists have overturned the old notion that Southern women acquired power only through pretense, the flirting coquetry of a Scarlett O'Hara. Now it was possible to pretend and speak truely, imagining on paper what was once too improper or bizarre to state. Asked why Southerners wrote so often about freaks, Flannery O'Connor responded, "Maybe because we can still recognize them."

What they also recognized was a native voice, and with it they reclaimed their regional place as well. That change is most evident with Southern black women writers, who have chronicled a history of triple oppression, regional, racial, and sexual. Everything converges in their works, as they speak to and for Southern life. In an essay recounting how she wrote her novel, *The Color Purple* (1981), Alice Walker says that she tried to write in cities but failed. Her characters told her to leave New York, and again to leave San Francisco, finally to settle in the country of northern California. There she and they found a halfway ground for meeting, because it resembled both Georgia and Africa: "Seeing the sheep, the cattle, and the goats, smelling the apples and the hay, one of my characters, Celie, began, haltingly, to speak." Out of that place came a voice; one that has raised the South to the stature of international regard.

The South: an inferior country? Today we can say that the South is no longer "down" there, but everywhere. The night in 1910 when Quentin Compson tried so hard not to hate the South, Eudora Welty was an infant in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1983 she journeyed to Harvard, Quentin's university, to deliver a series of lectures, later published as *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984). At the end she read a triumphant passage from one of her stories. A young couple take the train from Chicago, heading south to get married. At sunrise they pass the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers:

> They were looking down from a great elevation and all they saw was at the point of coming together, the bare trees marching in from the horizon, the rivers moving into one, and as he touched her arm she looked up with him and saw the long, ragged, pencil-faint line of birds within the crystal of the zenith, flying in a V of their own, following the same course down. All they could see was sky, water, birds, light, and confluence. It was the whole morning world. And they themselves were a part of the confluence. Their own joint act of faith had brought them here at the very moment and matched its concurrence, and proceeded as it proceeded. Direction itself was made beautiful, momentous. They were riding as one with it, right up front. It's our turn! she'd thought exultantly. And we're going to live forever.

Of course they cannot live forever, but this buoyant idealism that speaks through the earth will not soon die. Rivers justify this hope, for they are flowing south, bearing fresh soil ever to the Delta, replenishing and reshaping that great wedge of earth and sand. The Delta, Mark Twain wrote, is the most restless real estate in America, giving and taking through its seasonal rise and fall. To William Faulkner the river was Old Man, mysterious and implacable, a force that people could never outguess. But in geological terms the Delta is always the newest part of the South, even if its human problems remain very old.

In the late 1970s a young black journalist named Chet Fuller traveled across the South, posing as an unemployed farm laborer. His book, *Journeys Through the South* (1981), describes his encounters with a land emerging from segregation, just learning to face the troubles and mercies that come from building a new order. Most memorable of all was his approach to the Mississippi Delta: "...I had not expected the terrible beauty of the night-black soil, so rich it looked as if it could feed the world." That is the Delta's terror, that it forms some of America's richest soil—and a home to its poorest people. To change that story would give the Delta its own voice and place, in a South that is not inferior country, but ever on the rise.

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Halfway Home: How Do We Get the Rest of the Way?

William Winter*

When the Commission on the Future of the South met in Atlanta three years ago, we asked Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas to appraise where we were starting from. The Governor gave us our direction in a line that was to become the subject of our report. He said, "We're halfway home and a long way to go."

The report itself reflected on the progress of that journey. Its opening paragraphs contained these words:

The familiar song says that old times in Dixie are "not forgotten." William Faulkner adds that in the South the past is not only not forgotten—it's not even past! History is to a people what memory is to an individual, and too often the Old South preferred the yesterday, postponing changes until the weather cooled, the crops were in, or the moon was in the right phase.

We dare not retrace that long, weary road. To honor the past is one thing. To prefer it will cost us the future.

So I ask you today, "How do we get all the way home?" And when I ask that question, I do not ask it for some of us. I ask it for all of us. This is the heart of the problem. Not enough of our fellow Southerners have been making the journey. Some have not even been starting it.

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Commission on the Future of the South;
former Governor, State of Mississippi

As long as I can remember, going back to the days of the great depression when I was growing up on a hill farm in Grenada County, I have been appalled by the abuse of our resources. I remember the eroded, gullied land that had once been productive, the stripped and slashed forests of South Mississippi, the clogged and polluted rivers that smelled of chemicals and creosote. But what I particularly remember are those blank and empty faces of a generation of young citizens—black and white—whom I knew as a boy and whose lives have been made less productive because they did not have access to basic education.

We have now largely reclaimed our land and replenished our forests and restored our rivers. As for our human resources we have not done so well.

We are now only halfway home because we were unable and in too many instances unwilling to make the investments in human resource development—in human capital formation—that would have made a difference. I am uncomfortable when I reflect on how many people are today unable to earn a decent livelihood simply because, as they were growing up, they were unable for whatever reason to secure an adequate education.

Our underdeveloped human capital remains our greatest barrier to economic growth and prosperity.

In some instances, it was unhappily the result of individual choice, but in most instances it was because the opportunity for a competitive education simply was not available. As late as the middle 1950's at the time of the Brown decision, according to a report of a Mississippi state legislative committee, only one white child in four in my state was graduating from high school, and only one in forty blacks was graduating from high school.

These undereducated people are now the ones who should be approaching their peak earning capacity but who, in too many instances, are among the ranks of the unemployable. They are the flesh and blood human beings who are included in those cold, bleak statistics that show Mississippi with some 370,000 functional illiterates.

I do not recite these numbers to dredge up old memories, I mention them only because they indicate the basis of our present problems and because we must now resolve to see that another generation does not come of age without the skills to compete in an increasingly competitive world.

Having said that, however, I would also remind you that in spite of the considerable recent progress that we have made in educational achievement, we are confronted with a more difficult set of problems than we have known before. Faced with the most competitive, demanding, globally involved challenge in our history, we are still not producing the number of skilled workers that will enable us to be competitive in a global economy.

We are in a contest now to see which country can make the best use of its human resources. At the present time we are not competing very well, with the highest drop-out rate and the highest illiteracy rate of any of the industrialized nations.

Our underdeveloped human capital remains our greatest barrier to economic growth and prosperity. The plain fact is that as long as we have so many undereducated people, our state and region are going to be poorer than the rest of the country. Poorly educated people translate into poor people. Education is the only thing that will break the cycle of poverty. It is the only thing that will unlock the door to economic opportunity.

Dr. Bill Friday, the distinguished former President of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill understands this. I heard him last summer describe to the annual meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board what it means to be poor, as expressed by a woman in his state:

> Poverty is a stick the world beats you with and when the world no longer uses that stick, you use it on yourself. Poverty smells like a kerosene stove. It feels like wearing somebody else's clothes. It hurts like walking in shoes that fit someone else first.

She then added:

> I didn't go to college until I was 45. At my 25th high school reunion, I saw us still mostly the same; the "haves" still had, and the poor had half a dozen kids, if not grandkids. Education had moved a few to middle class. Diligence, a few more, but I could have drawn a neat line through the town that's still divided by more than the railroad tracks. Poverty still stands on those tracks, looks across, up and down, for a way out. Poverty is always being on the edge of good things going on. You are never allowed to join in. You don't ask. Even for events that are free. You stand in the shadows and accept. That's the worst poverty of all . . . accepting. Poverty is the color of a bruise; a birthmark on your soul.

He then went on to say this about the relationship of poverty and education:

> We shall either place a higher priority on education and the opportunity for learning and training or we shall fail to achieve, as individuals and as a region, the rich potential we hold in trust. What a tragedy that would be for our country and for each of us. History shows that Southerners are doers and we must meet this objective and do it now—whatever it takes. The states that put this kind of premium upon training and development surely will lead us all.

Why has our region lagged in per capita income? It is certainly not because we are lacking in natural resources. By anybody's standards this is a naturally rich area—productive land, abundant energy, bountiful timber, plenty of water, clean air. It is poor because we have too many under-productive people. Put in plain, hard-headed economic terms, it is not just a zero to our economy to have so many undereducated people. It is a minus. The more undereducated people our state has, the poorer it is. Because they are undereducated, they can't carry their share of the burden. They are the people who have to be carried.

We have a profile of our present work force and we are able to project that profile to the year 2000. About 75 percent of those in the work force at the end of this century are already working, and all have been born. Of the current work force, nationally 45 percent are female, 15 percent are minority, and 25 percent are functionally illiterate. For this region the minority and illiteracy figures will be higher.

But what is projected to happen between now and the year 2000? Of those who enter the work force in the next decade, 42 percent will be minority or new immigrants. Two-thirds will be women, and 21 percent will be minority or immigrant women. Only 15 percent will be native white men. This means for a state like Mississippi that we shall be competing effectively only as we create a more broadly based educated citizenry than we have known before or than we have been interested in creating before. In a word, we cannot afford to waste any of our human resources.

An essential part of this strategy for the future must necessarily consist of greatly expanding our programs to reduce adult illiteracy. This effort, now under way with unprecedented intensity, is essential to rescue a generation who somehow got left out.

But at the same time we must keep this present generation in school. The drop-out rate of 33 to 40 percent that we have tolerated in the past is unacceptable. After years of burying our heads in the sand, we have now finally put in place a system that is capable of seeing to it that children go to school and stay in school.

More than laws are needed, though. There must be developed an attitude in every community that will change at least some of the more pervasive conditions that create drop-outs in the first place. I am talking about conditions in the home and in the neighborhood. I am talking about generational problems where there is an inadequate understanding of family values and family responsibility. I am talking about the high incidence of teenage pregnancy that in Mississippi last year saw 20 percent of all babies being born to teenage mothers, two-thirds of whom had no husband and in some instances could not identify the father. We must address this problem with a no-holds barred educational program in the schools supported by knowledgeable health care professionals.

For those mothers who work, or who need to work, the availability, affordability and quality of child care is of increasing concern. More than one-half of all children under the age of six now have mothers who work, and that number is growing all the time. We must expand our efforts, already encouragingly under way, to provide in conjunction with schools, churches, and private industry, affordable child care for those children who need it.

These are not problems that our school system alone can solve. They are conditions that communities as a whole must face. With fewer public funds, there now arises the demand for a higher commitment of private effort such as that which has been advanced in Tupelo, Mississippi, where the business community in cooperation with a local foundation and the appropriate public agencies is beginning to reduce those at risk conditions and with them the school drop-outs and the juvenile delinquents.

There is another major dimension to this already complex agenda that must be addressed. That has to do with the huge number of substandard houses that so many people are obliged to live in. While Sugar Ditch in Tunica attracted national attention for a short time, the unhappy fact is that too many other communities still have their Sugar Ditches. It is my observation that no condition of American life so debilitates and reduces human motivation and capacity as that caused by living in squalor and decay. I recognize the immensity of this problem and our lack of immediate capacity to solve it, but I also insist that there has been a general lack of consistent and resourceful effort at both the public and private level to deal with this malaise. The fact that there are a number of communities which have all but eliminated substandard housing is proof, though, that with the right local commitment it can be done.

> . . . no condition of American life so debilitates and reduces human motivation and capacity as that caused by living in squalor and decay.

The mention of a community like Tupelo as an example of dynamic and dramatic progress points up what may well be the most vital element in this whole process of finding solutions to our problems. That, put very simply, is the quality of local leadership. No program or plan is any better than the human beings who will implement it. What is frequently lacking in too many of our hard-pressed communities is the vision and the know-how to come to grips with the issues and take advantage of the resources at hand.

We are moving into an era of the American experience, whether we like it or not, where the federal government, now staggering under an unprecedented national debt, lacks the fiscal capacity and the decision-making ability to create major new initiatives. That is bad news for a relatively poor state like Mississippi which is called on to bear a disproportionately heavy burden with its low per capita income and its high human needs. It must be, however, a basis not for discouragement but for added incentive.

Let me finally assure you that I am not suggesting that for every problem with which we are confronted, there is a sure and certain answer. Whatever the limits our present national fiscal situation may impose on the nation, I cannot accept the corollary that if the federal government is no longer able to do it, we don't need it done. We Americans still live under a social contract. As Dr. Daniel Bell has recently written, we must somehow turn might into duty and right into obligation.

That, I hope, is what President Bush means by a "kinder, gentler nation," but rhetoric alone will not get us there. This is a country that on so many occasions in our history has put self-interest aside in support of causes larger than ourselves. Now it seems to me we have a special opportunity to perform in accordance with our finest traditions.

We have always been a generous people, sharing sometimes what we did not have. Now that we have so much, let us for goodness sake not fall into the trap of ignoring our own. These are not obligations that we can casually pass on to others.

I am encouraged by what I see happening in this Delta region to identify opportunities for raising the quality of life for the people who live here. The efforts of the recently created Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission hold out great promise for the creation of new strategies, many of which must be implemented by private and local leadership.

In that connection, I would cite as a particularly significant initiative the present plans for the organization of a three-state foundation that will have as its sole purpose the bringing of major corporate and foundation support to the human and economic development needs of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

This foundation will have as its major thrust the combining of economic development strategies with programs aimed at adult literacy training and the reduction of teenage pregnancy and other factors that cause so many families in this region to be at risk. Specifically, it is hoped that an economic lift can be provided through the growing of alternative crops that will keep more people on the land. At the same time, it is proposed that an intensive literacy program and other human development programs using interactive video techniques would be available for those growing and processing the crops. This will obviously require careful planning, but the concept is one that has been enthusiastically endorsed by those who observe the needs of this area. If we really believe, as we say we do, that there should be less reliance on big government, let us make certain that we are prepared to help build the public-private partnerships, and to mobilize individual initiative and enterprise that will make this a more productive nation.

As the Commission report concluded, with too much need and too little money, we must make our investments where the return will be the highest. The best way to buy shares of the future with guaranteed profit is to invest in the interdependent lives of our fellow human beings.

The Land-Grant University and Economic Development

Walter Washington*

My charge is to share with you some remarks about the land-grant university and economic development. America has a unique system of colleges and universities, known as land-grant institutions. There are some seventy colleges and universities in this system. Then, what is a land-grant university?

Land-grant institutions were established under two Acts of Congress, the First Morrill Act of 1862 and the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The Act of 1862 granted 30,000 acres of federal land for each member of the Senate and the House of Representatives in each state. This land was to be sold to provide a permanent endowment for the establishment in each state of "at least one college where the leading objective shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as relate to agriculture and mechanic arts . . . in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

By 1863 nine states had accepted the terms of the Morrill Act of 1862 and created land-grant institutions or assigned the specified functions to existing schools within their boundaries. Today, these institutions are know as Iowa State University, the University of Vermont, Kansas State University, Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Missouri, Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Wisconsin. Mississippi State University and Alcorn State University were designated land-grant institutions by the Mississippi Legislature in 1878.

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The second Morrill Act of 1890 provided each state with additional funds to support institutional programs at land-grant universities. This act also permitted the establishment or designation of 17 historically black colleges and universities as land-grant institutions. These colleges and universities, with the exception of West Virginia State University, are know as the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University (1890s). Alcorn State University was reaffirmed a land-grant institution under the Second Morrill Act of 1890 on March 30, 1892.

The land-grant system is a tripod system of teaching, research, and public service. In addition to the First and Second Morrill Acts, several significant acts or legislative authorities have lead to growth and development of the land-grant system. These acts are:

- The Homestead Act of 1862 gave farmers opportunities to gain ownership of state- and federally-owned land for farming purposes.
- The Hatch Act of 1887 authorized an annual federal appropriation to each state for an agricultural experiment station to conduct research at a land-grant college or university.
- The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service in agriculture and home economics to assist land-grant institutions to disseminate useful information on subjects relevant to agriculture, home economics, and related disciplines.
- The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 promoted a vocational training program that served to strengthen practical needs of farmers and high school students. By 1923, 19 land-grant institutions were offering this practical training program. Today, nearly all of the land-grant institutions are engaged in some form of vocational training.
- The Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 authorized the allocation of funds to each state to support institutional programs in agriculture in land-grant institutions.
- Federal appropriations earmarked for the 1890s started with legislative authority under Public law 89-106 to conduct agricultural research. Significant funding for research under this law occurred in fiscal year 1972 as did funding under Section 3-d of the Smith-Lever Act for 1890 Cooperative Extension. Permanency in funding for the 1890s was subsequently provided by enabling legislation identified as Public Law 95-113, Section 1444 for Cooperative Extension and section 1445 for research, now referred to as the Evans-Allen research program.

To briefly recap what I have said to this point, the First and Second Morrill Acts gave birth to land-grant institutions. Their mission is threefold: to teach, to conduct research, and to provide public service, especially in the areas of agriculture, home economics and related disciplines. They are financially supported by state and federal legislative authorities and acts and by the private sector.

Now to economic development. Forested by a rich past, a very productive present, and a promising future, land-grant institutions will be in the forefront of economic development. For this country to remain great, land-grant institutions must be in the forefront and have a major role in economic development.

Then, what is economic development? It is a complex process leading to greater social and economic well-being for people and their communities. It is multifaceted, with four major components:

Community development—which includes all services that communities are required to provide, such as schools and education, health facilities, welfare, fire and police protection, roads and recreation facilities.

Human resource development—which includes people, their training and skills, their values, attitudes, and goals for their families and for their communities.

Economic resource development—which includes various forms of economic activity that increases jobs for people and that generates income for an ever increasing number of people.

Natural Resource Development—which includes improved utilization of natural resources, that is, land, water, air, scenery, etc.

With these four components in mind, then economic development can be defined as improved employment opportunities, higher per capita incomes, income redistribution, and institutional and educational improvements. Therefore, we can say that economic development requires planning, financing, and development of facilities and services for people and their communities that will result in increased or improved economic, social or political growth and/or well-being in these communities.

Having a major role in economic development, land-grant institutions must have the ability to identify and respond to the needs of people and their communities. Some of these needs are:

- More and better basic services, such as water and waste disposal systems, fire and police protection, transportation, education, medical and recreation facilities.
- Increase and/or improvements in basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter.

- More and better jobs, well-paying jobs that will entice/encourage young people to stay put, creating a better tax base, and thus having a multiplier effect of creating other jobs and community improvements.
- More and better housing facilities.
- Better local government services and leaders.
- More youth development programs and services.
- Human and natural community resources fully developed and utilized.

Land-grant colleges and universities must address these needs. If they are successful, then economic development will occur. That is:

- Economic competitiveness of communities will be strengthened.
- People and communities will be able to depend on more sources of income.
- Families and communities will have less difficulty adjusting to the impact of political, economic and social changes.
- Better, skilled community leadership will be developed along with the natural resource base, both very critical to economic revitalization of communities.

1890s represent a fourth of this country's land-grant institutions but account for more than 50 percent of blacks receiving undergraduate degrees in agriculture.

The remainder of this message will focus attention on the 1890 land-grant institutions and economic development. These institutions throughout their history have met the needs of their clientele by offering quality programs of teaching, research and service. In agriculture, an area very significant to economic development, especially in rural areas, the 1890s have made many noteworthy contributions.

Prior to the 1960s, because of racial segregation, the 1890s and other historically black colleges and universities that offered academic programs in agriculture granted almost 100 percent of the undergraduate degrees to blacks in agriculture. Today, 1890s represent a fourth of this country's land-grant institutions but account for more than 50 percent of blacks receiving undergraduate degrees in agriculture. Of the black graduates who ultimately earn advanced and professional degrees in agriculture, an overwhelming majority graduated from an 1890 institution. These and other graduates in agriculture from the 1890s are making worthy contributions to agriculture and economic development as teachers, researchers, administrators, and public servants while employed with the 1890s, the 1862s, other educational institutions, private industry, and local, state and federal government agencies.

As we reflect on the contributions made by the 1890s to agriculture and economic development, we must not overlook the contributions made by men such as Tuskegee University's Dr. George Washington Carver. He revolutionized the production of soybeans, peanuts, and sweet potatoes in the South and helped to diversify the economy of the entire southern region. He developed more than 300 by-products from peanuts and sweet potatoes, including plastics, dyes, medicines, flour, powdered milk, wood stains, and fertilizer. By doing so, he created markets for those products that otherwise did not exist and this certainly improved the demand and income situation in agriculture.

Other blacks who worked at an 1890 institution or who received training and/or assistance from an 1890 school have also made noteworthy contributions to economic development. They did so during the late 1800s and early 1900s as inventors and through scientific discoveries. Grandville T. Woods invented an egg incubator; J. M. Mitchell a check-row corn planter; G. W. Murray a combined furrow-opener and stalk-knocker, a cultivator, and a planter and fertilizer-distributor-reaper; and P. D. Smith a potato digger and a grain binder.

In more recent years, the 1890s have emphasized economic development by implementing agricultural research and Extension programs that have economic growth and development impact on people, especially rural people. These programs have led to four accomplishments:

Ways and means to increase income opportunities for people.

Examples are:

- Farmers have been advised and encouraged to select enterprises carefully, resulting in higher net farm incomes.
- Farmers have been advised and encouraged to accept and follow recommended management and technical practices, resulting in higher net farm incomes.
- Development of direct market outlets (roadside markets, farmers' markets, pooling/cooperatives and pick-your-own) for farmers to market their produce have resulted in more stable markets and higher net farm incomes.
- Development of methods to diagnose, control and prevent the prevalence of bacterial and parasitic diseases in order to reduce mortality rates and to improve the quality of animals, resulted in higher net farm incomes.
- Work with farmers to produce alternative agricultural enterprises in order to use family labor and other resources more efficiently, results in higher net farm incomes.

Ways and means to improve the quality of life, including the environment, for people.

The family is the primary social unit in our society. It is influenced by psychological, social and economic factors and must be made the focal point for improving the quality of life. By making the family the focal point for the purpose of improving the quality of life and thus enhancing economic development, 1890 institutions have worked with families to build on their strengths, to develop interpersonal skills, to promote optimal development of their children, and to adapt to economic and social changes. In assisting families, 1890 institutions have (a) developed management packages and modules for use with hard to reach families, (b) developed family economics and management materials that include budgeting, decision-making, record-keeping, consumer law, and career alternatives, (c) examined the academic performance of students relative to food habits, selected socio-economic factors, behavioral characteristics, and residential locality and their impact on quality of life, and (d) identified factors that are predictive of occupational attainment and the quality of life.

These findings and materials were used to formulate educational and outreach programs that have had an impact on economic development especially in the rural sector. There is no doubt that education, formal and non-formal, is certainly a key, if not the key, to economic development. Individuals, families, communities and society have a better quality of life because of educational pursuits and achievements. This is true because as the level of educational attainment increases, people tend to live in better environments, are more likely to be employed in well-paying jobs, are more likely to have a better outlook on life, and are more likely to be active and responsible citizens.

Ways and means of improving food safety, human nutrition, human health, housing, clothing, and other basic needs for people.

To live as responsible citizens, human beings have needs that must be fulfilled. They have the need to be healthy, to have proper nutrition, to have safety in food preparation and preservation, to have adequate housing and comfortable clothing and so fourth. In this regard, 1890 land-grant institutions have worked:

- To determine to what extent health is related to socio-economic factors, food habits, nutrition knowledge, behavioral characteristics, and physiological development.
- To determine the relationship between nutrition and diet to health and to evaluate whether this new knowledge increases awareness of and concern about food eaten.
- To evaluate economic factors associated with food quality, safety and production.
- To establish and validate parameters for evaluating and maintaining chemical safety in food.
- To evaluate the effect of microwave cooking on nutrient retention compared with conventional cooking methods.
- To determine and obtain housing alternatives for low income rural families and to evaluate societal constraints such as regulations, policies, land use and energy use that might impact on available housing alternatives.
- To determine to what extent institutional and infrastructional barriers and incentives to community acceptance of innovations in housing design, construction, and financing affect the availability of proper housing for people.
- To determine and evaluate why housing alternatives that involve older houses are selected without adequate evaluation of structural components, the repair and maintenance costs and the energy expenditures expected.

> Improving the quality of life and thus enhancing economic development, 1890 institutions have worked with families to build on their strengths . . .

- To determine actual and perceived clothing, nutrition and housing status as impacted by social, economic, psychological and physical factors.
- To help people learn to make better decisions in the selection and purchase of more functional clothing and to understand the quality of construction, care required, and durability in those clothes.
- To determine to what extent homeowners are interested in learning what they can do to save energy and thus save money and relate this to acceptability of changes in life-styles associated with energy conservation in the home.

In researching these basic human needs, in implementation of the findings, and in providing opportunities for people to obtain the basic human needs, 1890s have had an impact on economic development.

Ways and means of identifying and assisting community leaders to obtain, improve and develop community resources.

For communities to grow economically and for people in the communities to meet their basic human needs, community leaders must take an active role in providing adequate community resources that are vital to this process. They must plan, develop programs, and seek and sieze opportunities for financial and technical support from governmental agencies and other sources.

The 1890s are a source of technical support to community leaders and have worked with the leaders:

- To conduct feasibility studies for the establishment of fire, water, and disposal systems and to obtain grants and/or financing for the systems.
- To help them become better at what they do in the areas of proposal writing, grantsmanship, program planning, development and implementation, advertising and marketing of what their communities have to offer, and decision making.
- To help them provide meaningful information and assistance to people for the purpose of increasing their decision-making ability.
- To help them improve their ability to retain and expand local businesses and to attract new businesses.
- To help them obtain educational information and training in a variety of subject matter areas as related to job performance and duty.
- To help them establish criteria to effectively and efficiently evaluate the success or failure of development programs.
- To help them respond, cope and deal with crisis situations.
- To help them recognize the need for community facilities and services and appropriate steps to take to obtain them.
- To help them recognize job training and other educational needs of people and provide opportunities for the people to receive it.

There is no doubt that economic development can best be achieved when community leaders take an active role. Those astute community leaders are doing so and are taking advantage of what the 1890s have to offer.

To close, economic development will continue to be of concern to the 1890 land-grant colleges and universities. In fact, in the southern region of this country, 1890 institutions will become even a greater resource for economic development. These institutions are located in states with many small communities and towns and small and minority farmers, areas where agriculture will remain a major concern. The 1890 institutions must and will provide assistance in economic development for these communities and their people. In providing this assistance, the 1890 institutions will conduct research and implement teaching and Extension programs that will lead to:

- Improved crops and livestock and the development of new varieties of crops and new breeds of livestock.
- Greater production of crops and livestock through the use of better soil management and conservation, the use of fertilizers and other chemicals, and better cultivation and harvesting methods.
- Improved technology in the use and development of farm machinery and equipment.
- Greater stability and profitability in agriculture for small farmers producing vegetables, specialty crops, and fruits.
- Elimination or greater control of diseases, insects, weeds, and other such problems that negatively impact on profitability in agriculture.
- Develop and implement programs aimed at solving people problems. Problems that restrict or retard economic growth and development. Problems that are associated with income, welfare, health, housing, recreation, education, etc.
- Assist community and lay leaders in their economic development efforts.

Let me leave you with this thought. While it is a historical fact that the 1890 land-grant colleges and universities have not received an equitable allocation of financial resources (federal, state or local), prospects of positive change are still questionable. Nevertheless, this will not be a deterrent to the efforts put forth by the 1890 land-grant schools to make life better for people.

Public Education in the Rural South

David L. Powe*

Three years ago, the Commission on the Future of the South issued a report entitled, *Halfway Home, a Long Way to Go*. Mississippi is presently examining the education reforms of 1982 and receiving a similar review. This state has made tremendous progress in education reform; however, it still has a long way to go. Mississippi is realizing that education reform is a process, not an event.

In 1982, Mississippi passed its Education Reform Act which included many of the same reforms called for in the 1983 nationally commissioned report "A Nation at Risk."

The 1982 reforms implemented over the past seven years have dealt with such issues as school finance, teacher pay, accreditation standards, personnel evaluation, out-come based accountability of student performance, and many others. These challenges have been accomplished, but new ones must be met.

As a realization that the state economy of today and in the future is directly linked to education today, Mississippi has got to make greater strides in making further long term commitments and sacrifices to compete economically.

Mississippi is presently competing with nations throughout the world for jobs. Many of these are jobs that we have worked to bring into our state. There are approximately 700 million people worldwide who work these jobs for a mere fraction of what Mississippians would expect to earn from them.

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*President, Mississippi Delta Junior College

What we must realize is that the development of knowledge and skills is the key to economic success. Most of the jobs now and in the future require more than a secondary education, kindergarten through grade twelve. Mississippi cannot continue to lose 35% to 40% of its school-aged children to dropping out. Mississippi cannot afford to have a population statewide where approximately 27% or 400,000 of the citizens are functionally illiterate. This is the opportune time that we can work together for common positive solutions, not a time for finding reasons of failure.

Blaize' attitudes that "some will get" and "others just don't care" is and should be an emotion of the past. We should expect total literacy, human development and training and nothing less.

Education in the rural south, especially Mississippi, can only improve with the building of public, including parental, support. The sociological trends indicate a strong shift from the traditional two-parent family unit, to single parent homes with increasingly less supervised time for youngsters. Other trends indicate rises in teenage pregnancies, gang activity, discipline problems, drug abuse and others. Secondary institutions have to identify these trends along with parents, community leaders, local civic and political leaders, and state leaders, business, industry, and governmental agencies. Partnership to aggressively seek solutions to these new sociological trends have to be formed and activated for positive results.

No state agency, the state legislature, nor the governor's office will decide the positive fate and ultimate direction of education in Mississippi. Parents, local communities, business leaders, and other interested persons must decide they're willing to invest their time, energy, resources, including money to develop better schools. They must feel a sense of ownership with a resultant sense of pride.

The Education Reform Act of 1982 drove forward a new era in Mississippi's educational opportunities. Kindergarten through twelve has been improving in many areas. They are as follows:

A. **Achievement Test Scores**

1. Elementary: Improving slowly
2. Secondary: Improving slower than elementary
3. Functional Literacy Examination: Required of eleventh graders for graduation - improving results

B. **College Entrance Exams**

1982-1987: Mississippi's average ACT scores increased by 5.2 percent, compared to a 1.6 percent increase nationwide.

C. **Kindergarten Programs**

Full-day kindergartens are available in every school district and they are succeeding. Achievement tests have improved each year since 1986 when testing begun.

D. **Teacher Aides**

Provided in first three grades. This is a major reason for student improvement in elementary grades.

E. **Improvement:**

Higher Standards for Teacher Certification Personnel Appraisal and Staff Development

F. **Teacher Pay Increase.**

In 1980, average teacher pay in Mississippi was slightly more than $13,000. In 1987, average salaries were $19,000. In 1989-90, average pay will be 24,365.

G. **Increase in Per-pupil Expenditures**

1. 1980-81 - $1,771
2. 1988-89 - $2,845

Even though the reforms to date have made a tremendous difference in educational opportunities and positive growth has been measured, significant potential exists for improvement. In comparison with other states, Mississippi has progressed; however, other states have also improved. Mississippi students are still educationally disadvantaged. Areas where Mississippi needs further attention are as follows:

A. **Student Achievement**

Achievement scores continue to fall below the national average. ACT scores are the lowest in the nation.

B. **Dropouts**

The dropout rate is one of the five highest in the nation. From 1982 to 1986, Mississippi's dropout rate decreased from about 37% to 36.7%.

C. **Early Childhood Development**

One-fourth of the children in Mississippi live in poverty. These are formative years and these children lack early developmental skills. There is a need for early identification and intervention.

D. **Adult Literacy**

Over 400,000 adults in Mississippi require better literacy skills.

E. **Resources**

Mississippi has increased its per-pupil spending since 1982. Its ranking nationally has gone to 48th in 1989 from 50th in 1982. Its teacher salaries have gone from 50th to 44th, to an average of $22,677 in 88-89. This same period the Southeastern average was $24,863 while nationally it was $29,567.

Even though Mississippi is improving, others are as well. Only through a continued aggressive effort in education reform will Mississippi compete regionally, nationally, and worldwide.

It is paramount that Mississippi address the next level of opportunities which will further improve excellence in education and economic development. One of these areas will be better access to post-secondary higher education programs designed to improve the capabilities of the workforce. Over one-half of Mississippi's workforce of the year 2000 is now beyond high school age. It is well known that our citizens who have abilities and skills may leave us. Persons without these abilities and skills will probably stay in Mississippi. Mississippi's growth economically depends on the development of its people to the highest level of productivity. It is essential that access to appropriate educational training programs be provided. This includes geographic access, schedule access, financial access, and access according to the background one now has. It is important these efforts work with the citizens who choose to live in the state. The junior/community colleges have a distinctive role in upgrading the workforce, introducing people to higher education, and enhancing lifestyles.

The Governor of Mississippi is proposing to develop a package of reforms in partnership with parents, educators, the Board and Superintendent of education, the IHL Board, the Community/Junior College Board, business leaders, and others. The new reform package will address the following issues:

A. School finance
B. Remedial education
C. Higher education
D. School facilities and transportation
E. School governance
F. Vocational education
G. Community/junior college

Also proposed for study are the restructuring of educational processes. They are:

A. Creating the school environment for excellence
B. Teacher compensation
C. Technology for school improvement
D. Early childhood development
E. Enhancing adult literacy
F. At risk students

Public education in Mississippi is the key to its economic future. Statewide commitment, with leadership from state-elected officials, in partnership with citizens, translates into a positive base of excellence for the 21st century.

The Delta Project: A Perspective for Social and Economic Research and Development

Arthur G. Cosby*

There is little doubt that Doss Brodnax's invitation for me to participate in the deliberations of this meeting was to provide a demographic and statistical overview of the Mississippi Delta region. Let me assure you that is a request that I've gone to great lengths to circumvent. Rather that spend a great deal of time informing you of social and economic facts, I have elected to provide the services of the Monitor Mississippi Laboratory as an informative, interactive way of portraying the Delta in terms of economic and other social dimensions. Social Science Research Center staff (Mr. Jon Carr and Mr. Mitchell Brackin) have been available throughout the meetings of the committee to provide this information.

It is desirable to discuss the Delta region at a level of abstraction that is perhaps a step or two removed from data description. Rather, I have elected to provide an update on the progress of a research and development project directed toward the advancement of an 18-county area in the Mississippi Delta region. By doing this it will be possible to share with you the thinking of a large number of scientists, economic development experts, and, most importantly, local citizenry concerning the social and economic needs of a highly depressed

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*Director, Social Science Research Center,
Mississippi State University,

region. It reflects, in many ways, the collective development of an equation of social and economic development with, perhaps, a Delta flavor. By discussing the perspectives and directions of this project, perhaps increased meaning can be attached to the economic and social facts depicted so dramatically on the Monitor screen.

History of the Delta Project

The Delta project is a recent research and development endeavor that has grown out of a dialogue between leadership of the Mississippi Delta and leadership at Mississippi State University. Mr. Chip Morgan (Delta Council) and Dr. Rodney Foil (MSU) were among those who advocated a fundamental and, perhaps, different look at the needs of this region.

Initial discussions tend to focus, in business terms, on the Delta as a product rather than as a marketing issue. The central theme was that the Delta itself is an area that lacks competitiveness for social and economic investment and that a focus on change and improvement of the region was mandatory. Although marketing the region is an important issue, that has been left to others. Also, it became apparent that a long-term R and D effort was desirable rather than a quick fix. Many of the undesirable characteristics of the Delta are the result of a long history and it was patently unrealistic to think that a "new improved Delta" could occur overnight. This calls for a perspective of a long-term commitment of resources and intellectual capital. It was also felt that there must be heavy involvement of local citizenry, local leaders, elected officials, and the university researchers.

As a university professor, it was my feeling that the development strategy should engender enthusiastic interest among colleagues. It was my hope that a number would view the study of the Mississippi Delta's social and economic development as a viable and important aspect of their career. The reasoning is obvious. Good minds are needed to ask the critical questions of "why we are the way we are," "how we can become better" and "how we can improve." The more likely these questions are asked, the more likely we are able to develop an inventory of possibilities that can lead in a desired direction.

The Delta Project

Taking the above consideration into account, a research proposal for the development of the project was established and structured in a four-year time-frame. The activities of the project can be ordered in terms of yearly objectives. Year one is devoted to an extensive social and economic audit of the region. This is currently being accomplished by first sponsoring a joint meeting of Delta leaders and research scientists to determine priorities for research. These collectively derived priorities have then been structured in a set of chapters for a document entitled *The Portrait of the Delta*.

During years two and three, a process of discerning and assessing "alternative futures" for the region will be emphasized. Substantial effort will be devoted to asking the critical "what if" questions about the region. The fourth year will be devoted to the establishment and implementation of programs and approaches. It will also be a period of assessing the desirability of the concept of the Delta Project, its implementation, and its effectiveness.

Portrait of the Delta

Now, let us turn for a more detailed description of the evolving document *Portrait of the Delta*. During January of this year, a group of over forty Delta leaders, Delta knowledgables, and university researchers met for a day to establish a set of research priorities. Considerable time was spent inventorying positive aspects of the Delta, negative aspects of the Delta, and ranking areas of concern in terms of their importance. In all cases respondents were asked to structure their assessments in terms of the goals of social and economic development. For example, what are the disadvantages that keep the Mississippi Delta from being more competitive? The committee produced substantial inventories that list the positive and negative aspects of the Delta. From the meeting, we have developed a document, "Research Priorities for the Delta Project." Six areas of concern emerged. These were:

Education
Leadership
Race relations
Economic development and infrastructure
Poverty
Health

Following this collectively determined document concerning research and development priorities, Delta project scientists have proposed and are now preparing a 19-chapter volume that will audit the important social and economic circumstances as they now are seen to exist in the Mississippi Delta. The following chapters not only depict the direction of the social and economic audit; they also imply, on occasion, the direction of research and the potential for intervention and change.

Portrait of the Delta: A Chapter Outline

Preface

The volume will open with this brief description of the project, its goals, and how it came into being. The preface, to be written by several members of the Advisory Council of the Delta Project, will include acknowledgements of the civic groups, public officials, and community leaders who have supported the project. The authors will also discuss the reasons for selecting particular topics that are the foci of discussion in the chapters, the role of the Advisory Council in formulating the research agenda, and how this collection of research papers addresses the goals of the Delta Project.

Introduction

The address given by Dr. Charles W. Washington at the advisory committee meeting held in Cleveland, Mississippi on January 17, 1989 presents a balanced and inspiring view of the needs, goals and possibilities of future development of the Mississippi Delta region. The text, "A Delta Without Change is a Symbol Without Meaning," will, with Dr. Washington's permission, constitute the introductory chapter of the *Portrait*.

Historical background

This chapter will discuss the cultural, social and economic history of the Delta region. Of particular importance will be the ways in which the region's agricultural base has exerted a powerful influence on the evolution of social, cultural, and political patterns in the Delta and has dominated the course of economic development in the region.

Human capital: Demography of the Delta

Latest available demographic data will be used to develop a portrait of the Delta's population, highlighting the uniqueness of its demographic profile in comparison to other regions of the State and the nation, and assessing the implications of Delta demographics for regional development. Age and gender pyramids for the Delta will be compared to those for the rest of the state and for the nation as a whole, with particular attention to the region's dependency ratio (i.e., the number of residents below 15 and over 65 as a proportion of those between the two ages, or, the numbers in "dependent" age categories as a proportion of the working age population available to support them) and its special implication for development. This chapter will also use trends in fertility and mortality rates to determine the rate of natural increase in population, compare this to the actual increase in population, and discuss the reasons for implications of the disparity between low population growth and high natural rates of increase. Finally, the chapter will present breakdowns of the population by race to determine what differences there are by race in age/gender distributions and population growth rates, and what such differences might imply for the region's developmental prospects.

Human capital: Perceptions and attitudes

This chapter will present the results of survey data gathered in 1988 as part of the Mississippi Poll. Before one can mobilize public support behind efforts to bring about social and economic development in the Delta, one must first determine what the public's perceptions are of the major challenges facing the region and what their attitudes are on various social, political, and economic issues that shape people's willingness to contribute to community efforts to bring about developmental change. This chapter will document the patterns of attitudes found among various subgroups of the Delta on a variety of crucial economic, social and political questions. The chapter will begin by examining citizens' attachment to their community and their level of satisfaction with their social environment. Factors that affect patterns of out-migration will be especially salient in this analysis, as the analysis will allow us to identify what socioeconomic strata of which ethnic groups are most inclined to leave the Delta (and for what reasons), and what impact these patterns of out-migration will have on the supply of human capital in the region. The analysis will then examine public attitudes on a variety of issues involving race relations in the Delta, including the opportunities and barriers facing blacks. Given the unique racial demographics of the region and the historical importance of race relations in the development of the Delta, analysis of this dimension of public attitudes on developmental issues is essential. Finally, the chapter will explore the patterns of public attitudes toward a variety of political reform issues and public preferences regarding spending on a diverse array of public programs who's purpose is, ultimately, to stimulate social and economic development.

Human capital: Race relations

Only in the South, and particularly in the Delta region, do you find sizable black populations residing in rural and small town settings. The accompanying issues of race relations have far-reaching implications for economic and social development. This chapter will focus on such primary concerns as the ability of racially diverse rural populations to cooperate in economic development efforts so that their communities will become truly competitive with those in other regions of the nation. The chapter will also address such issues as the reluctance of investors outside of the state to locate facilities in settings with a large minority population, and what the communities of the Delta can do to correct the perceptions that contribute to such tendencies among potential investors. Finally, the chapter will present a detailed assessment of the economic and developmental dysfunctions of racial stereotypes and stereotyping, and of racial discrimination as a "color tax" in economic transactions that leads ultimately to suboptimal utilization of investment and human capital resources.

Human capital: Educational attainment

A major obstacle to economic and social development in the Mississippi Delta is the low level of educational achievement found among the population of the region. The resulting low skill level among the working age population and the lack of quality educational opportunities for the children of corporate management make the region less competitive as a potential site for new enterprises. Documentation of the distribution of educational attainment among the population of the Delta will include the numbers and proportions of persons in each level of educational attainment, drop-out rates (and reasons for dropping out), as well as other indicators of low educational achievement. A discussion of educational achievement and underachievement among all age groups and its impact on the quality of life and on prospects for social and occupational mobility will also be included.

Human capital: Capacity of the school systems

One reason for low levels of educational attainment is often the under-investment in or under-utilization of educational infrastructure. This chapter will document the educational infrastructure of city and county school districts in the Delta, including physical facilities, student-teacher ratios, tax money spent per pupil, and educational requirements and attainments of teachers for primary, middle, and secondary schools. In addition, vocational schools, junior colleges, and four-year institutions of higher education will be inventoried. Based on these findings, the chapter will present an assessment of the complementary roles that the different levels of educational institutions play in economic development, including their role in creating a productive and enlightened work force and in enhancing the general quality of life in such a way that the Delta would become an attractive environment for investment.

Human capital: Characteristics of the labor force

This chapter begins with the premise that the characteristics of the workforce determine in large measure the number and types of new enterprises that the region can attract and support; the qualifications of the work force determine in large measure the opportunities for new investment. Consequently, this chapter will describe the distribution of the Delta's labor force across various skill levels and, thus, document the availability of various skill levels in each of the counties of the region. The number of workers employed in various occupational categories can then be compared with trends in the creation of new businesses to identify those sectors of the labor force in which shortages or surpluses of workers can be anticipated. In this manner, this chapter should contribute to the efforts of planners and economic development specialists to target their recruitment efforts more effectively.

Human capital: Health and the health care system

This chapter will center around the theme that a healthy population and adequate health care facilities are essential to the maintenance of a productive work force and the creation of an attractive environment for new investments. Consequently, analysis will focus on documenting such indicators of health and health care as mortality rates, major causes of deaths, infant mortality rates, and the frequency with which major diseases occur in the Delta population, as well as the characteristics of the region's health care delivery resources, such as numbers of physicians and other health professionals, hospital beds, and the availability of other health programs such as rural health clinics. How these health-related factors can be seen as affecting regional development will be discussed.

Human capital: At risk youth

This chapter will discuss the dysfunctional social and economic effects of the problems of teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, drug use, youth crime, and single parent households. The chapter will document the rates at which such behaviors occur in Delta counties as compared to other counties in the state. The implications of such behavior patterns for social and economic development will be discussed, centering around the theme that such behaviors inhibit the growth of human capital, impose a burden on public and private resources that could otherwise be devoted to productive investments, and are indicative of a perceived lack of opportunities by those who engage in such behaviors.

Delta economy: Business climate and policy environment

This chapter will inventory and assess those local, state and federal policies and regulations that define the "business climate" of the Delta. Of particular concern will be the need to identify those state and local business laws, policies, and regulations that affect the Delta's competitiveness with other regions as a potential site for new businesses. Such things as tax structures, local regulations, tort reform, and issues raised in the "business bill of rights" will be explored with attention to their impact on economic development. The chapter will also assess the relative effectiveness of various programs and activities of state and local economic development agencies, and the incentive packages that localities have used to attract and retain industries.

Delta economy: Local government capacity

This chapter is viewed as a major contribution to the Portrait. It will document the structure of the tax base that is available to county and municipal governments to undertake economic development initiatives. It will present an analysis of current budgeting and expenditure patterns of local governments, and the impact of such policies on local economic development. In addition to the fiscal capacity of local governments, the chapter will explore levels of professionalism in county and municipal governments and the availability of professional staff at the local level, as well as the impact of governmental structures (e.g., strong mayor vs. mayor-council; county unit vs. beat system) on decision-making processes dealing with resource utilization for economic development and on the ability of local governments to respond in a timely fashion to development opportunities as they arise.

Delta economy: Physical infrastructure

This chapter will focus on the current state of the Delta's physical infrastructure and the potential impact of investment in infrastructure on the region's ability to cultivate and attract new enterprises. Such factors as proximity to major markets, the availability of highways and other transportation systems, the availability of industrial parks, airports, and water and sewage systems will be inventoried. How the current supply and geographical distribution of these assets in the Delta affect the region's potential for attracting new investments will be discussed.

Delta economy: The agricultural base

The Delta is known primarily as an agricultural region, and this chapter will document the dimensions of the region's agricultural economy and discuss its role in regional development. Of particular interest will be the extent to which the Delta's economy is dependent on the agricultural sector. This will be explored through comparisons of the Delta with the rest of the state on such matters as how many people (and what share of the work force) are employed in the agricultural sector, how much income is generated by the agricultural economy (both in absolute dollars and as a proportion of all income in the Delta), and the acreage and production levels of various commodities. In addition, this chapter will examine some of the recent changes in the agricultural sector which have had the most dramatic impact on the economy (e.g., the growth of aquaculture and the processing of agricultural products), and explore the potential for expanding the industrial sector of the region by focusing on the processing of the region's agricultural products.

Delta economy: Business patterns

The business patterns of the Delta will be described and compared to those for the rest of the State by documenting such things as the numbers and types of business enterprises in the Delta, the size of their work forces and payrolls, the revenues they tracked over time to determine what kinds of businesses are increasing in numbers and growing in size, and what kinds are decreasing in numbers or declining in size. This analysis should be of value to policy planners and economic development specialists as it will assist both in targeting their efforts more precisely on anticipated growth sectors of the economy.

Delta economy: The poverty hurdle

Although poverty cannot be dealt with in economic terms alone, this chapter will look at a limited aspect of this human problem—how low incomes, underemployment, and unemployment constitute a significant part of the economic environment of the Delta region and a burden on its prospects for development. The Delta will be compared to other regions of the state using data such as the income distribution, the number of people and households living below various measures of poverty, the number living in substandard housing, and the number of people unemployed, underemployed, and on various forms of public assistance. How dependence on public assistance affects the overall Delta economy and its prospects for economic improvement will be discussed.

Leadership: Government and community influentials

This chapter will focus on the quality of community leadership in the Delta, including both office-holding leaders and community influentials, and their role in mobilizing community resources and community support for regional development. Recent trends in electoral politics will be of particular interest in this chapter, as the analysis should link the changing demographic characteristics of the electorate with changes in the demographic profile of local elected officials. This chapter could also include recent data on what issues are most salient to different segments of the public in the Delta and how leaders there have responded to these sentiments. How white and black leaders may differ in their approaches to economic development and priorities will be of interest.

The image of the Delta

How Delta residents see themselves and how they are viewed by significant, external (to the Delta) constituencies may have an impact on the prospects for regional economic development. These issues will be addressed in this chapter. Our intent is to commission a nationally recognized Delta native (for example, Hodding Carter, or Willie Morris) to write an essay on how the Mississippi Delta is perceived by the opinion leaders and the general public outside of the State.

Summary: Framing the future

This chapter will highlight some of the major findings from the preceding chapters and weave them together into a portrait of the directions and prospects for future development of the Delta. The chapter should include some discussion of alternative futures for the Delta and the conditions that would be conducive to each of these alternative outcomes. However, major discussion of alternative futures will be presented in a future report, and this chapter need go no further than to indicate in general terms some of the issues that will be addressed in future studies.

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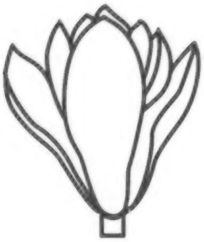
Traditional and Alternative Agriculture

Chip Morgan*



We would like to welcome you to the Mississippi Delta, an area spanning some 6-1/2 million acres which stretches alongside the east bank of the Mississippi River for approximately 200 miles, and remains protected from flooding by a man-made levee system for the entire length of the Delta. The region's typically flat topography slopes about one-half foot per mile for the entire length of the Delta and the Delta floodplain is approximately 65 miles wide at its widest point. The region was formed as an alluvial floodplain created by hundreds of years of Mississippi River flooding through the area. The earliest settlers of our region were some of the richest topsoils from the fertile Ohio and Missouri Basins which were transported down the Mississippi River to settle in the Mississippi Delta, making it one of the most highly productive and agriculturally intense regions on our continent. Although our region is similar to other rural areas of the country in that we continuously look for economic opportunities through the location of new manufacturing companies, alternative agriculture, and like others, revel in jubilation when we locate a new Wal-Mart store on the edge of town, it is the approximately $1.2 billion value of annual agricultural production that sustains the economic life of our

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*Executive Vice President and
former Chair, Delta Council

area each year. There are many economic uncertainties in rural America today, and even ordinary business investments which are made in our rural area seem to be classified as high-risk ventures today. However, unless there is an absolute economic depression or some economic setback of national scope, we know each year that we will generate in excess of $1 billion of new economic activity through the production of our four major crops.

Although cotton has remained the principal economic force in our agricultural production, totalling approximately $600 million in value last year, the Mississippi Delta has historically been driven by a search for alternative agricultures. Soon after World War II, Delta farmers began looking for an alternate crop for a vast number of acres of Delta land that was not technically classified as top-quality land. The advent of soybeans in the late 1940's was aimed at substituting soybeans on the heavier clay soil types found in the Delta, about 60% of the Delta's cultivable land. The Delta produces approximately $225 million in soybeans today, on approximately 2-1/2 million acres. In the mid 1960's, recognizing the capacity of our groundwater resources in the Delta, and the hundreds of thousands of acres of suitable land, the Delta adopted another alternate agriculture for the wisest use of our natural resource base when growers began experimenting with the production of long-grain rice. Today, approximately $200 million of rice production is grown on a estimated 300,000 acres in the region. And, in more recent history, the farm-raised catfish industry began searching for its rightful place among the land and water resource agriculture production base of the Mississippi Delta to become a $250 million production industry. Alternative agriculture is not a new idea in the Mississippi Delta, but the growers of this region fully recognize the countless farm failures and economic casualties that have been experienced in this area through the process of developing economic alternatives for what is commonly perceived as "traditional" agriculture. Alternative agriculture should be approached with extreme precaution and only after extensive research has been initiated to determine the economic feasibility of farmers' investments.

I must confess that I possibly have a traditional view on the subject of alternative agriculture which is, we must always search for alternatives that bring the most reliable and profitable return on outlays made by farming enterprises; but we must be extremely careful about abandoning the fundamental strengths of our "traditional" agricultural crops that have evolved as a result of their adaptability to the land and water resources of our respective areas. In our area of the country, we will continue to stress the need for research on alternative crops that may be adapted to our land and water resource base, but Delta Council strongly cautions that public sector research should be the primary support system for experimental research insofar as the development of new and alternative crops. This is the only way that the extremely high risks that are associated with new agriculture ventures can be blunted to some extent. Although farm-raised catfish has been a "Cinderella" story in American agriculture during recent years, many failures and financial casualties of major proportions can be cited by those who have studied the growth of the industry since 1970. This might suggest that there are no Cinderellas among the alternative agricultures of the future, but rather that there are numerous opportunities that might be further developed if research demonstrates that there is a practical economic purpose to be served by substituting some type of alternate agriculture for some of the marginal crops grown in various agricultural regions of the country.

Periodically, we review the merits of developing further processing of our agricultural production of cotton and soybeans in the Delta. Textile mills and soybean processing operations have been analyzed to determine the economic feasibility and regional competitiveness of further processing these two crops. With excess available capacity in the textile manufacturing industry on the east coast, and a substantial amount of unused soybean processing capacity sitting idle at various locations throughout the region, there is little incentive to invest in new capacity without any inherent advantage accruing to the new venture. These options will continue to be restudied as economic circumstances gradually alter.

Since the Delta's alternative crops of soybeans, rice, and catfish are now considered as traditional agriculture, along with our principal crop of cotton, let's take a few moments to discuss traditional agriculture in the Mississippi Delta. How did these four crops become traditional in the Delta? Did our land or water resource base change? Did our farmers suddenly become smarter? No, the answer is much more complex than any of these. A deep financial commitment, the development of infrastructure in rural America such as the Rural Electric Association, the Soil and Water Conservation Service, and a system of state and federal research for agricultural technology development, which is unique among countries around the world, have made it possible for the American farmer to experiment with alternative agriculture, while maintaining the fundamental economic efficiencies that accompany more traditional and proven agricultural crops.

We have no better land in Mississippi, nor do we have any better water resources than we had before soybeans, rice, and catfish were introduced to the Delta; but, we have benefited immeasurably from a public policy that has treated agriculture as one of our basic natural resources, and not just another private issue on the menu of political debates that tend to result in unreliable funding levels that would not and cannot sustain the long-term, high-risk nature of agricultural research.

Cattle in Oklahoma, potatoes in Maine, corn in Indiana, fruits and fresh vegetables in California and Florida, apples in Pennsylvania, and chickens in Arkansas—this is the stabilizing economic influence of rural America. On October 19, 1987, corporate equity on the New York Stock Exchange eroded at a rate of $1.28 billion per minute all day long—enough to cause the bankruptcy of any other developed nation. But, in the United States where our public policy has supported the development of a rural America where the real wealth of this country persists—rural America becomes an economic shock absorber for the cycles that occur when the exchange rate, monetary policy, and investor confidence on Wall Street becomes erratic in its behavior.

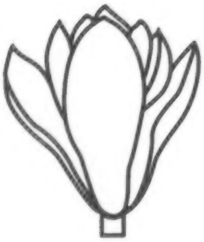
Alternative agricultural crops should always be a part of our agricultural research and production outlook; however, in order to maintain the viability of rural America, we must continue to focus on public works such as roads, bridges, health care, education and other essential infrastructure that are taken for granted in urban areas where tax revenues from sales, inventories, and highly-developed property generally support these types of fundamental services. In rural America, or more specifically in our region of the Mississippi Delta, if we expand our capabilities to increase our cotton yield an average of 50 pounds per acre, we generate $31 million of additional economic activity in our region. Suppose we increase catfish production 1,000 pounds per acre and we add another $52 million; boost soybean yields a mere five bushels per acre and we have added $66 million to all of our economic indicators in the region; and, increase rice by 10 bushels and we have added $12 million of economic activity. All of these are modest and attainable goals when you consider the history of our advanced technology in agricultural research; I cannot identify another single idea for rural development in our area which carries an almost certainty of contributing a total of $162 million of additional economic growth to the economy of our local rural area as a result of these increased production efficiencies. Statistically, research tells us that 86% of all farm income is spent on inputs and services within a 30-mile radius of production, so it is safe to assume that this additional economic activity provided through increased production will be invested in rural businesses and support services that comprise the glue which holds the rural farm economy together. These dollars do not include the transportation, storage, and other off-farm economic factors that further complement our rural economy.

The economic fabric that holds rural America together is tightly stitched with "traditional" agriculture. The clerk at our local hardware store in Leland, Mississippi, reported to me that she sold 13 miles of chain last year, to be used on local farming operations; our small auto dealership in our town of 3,500 people sells approximately 50 vehicles per month, with approximately two-thirds of those being farm vehicles or farm-related; the manager of the gasoline filling station where I pull up every Monday morning to get my 20 gallons of fuel told me that they market approximately 60 transport trucks of fuel per month to local farming operations in our area; and, 80% of the premiums paid to our local general insurance agency in Leland, Mississippi, are derived from insurance for farmers or farm property. "Traditional" American agriculture uses more petroleum products than the next three major industries in this country, combined. "Traditional" agriculture used 6-1/2 thousand tons of steel annually and enough rubber to provide tires for 7-1/2 million cars. These types of staggering economic statistics clearly demonstrate the close partnership between the economic livelihood of rural America and our American agricultural industry.

Alternative agriculture will always be an integral and very important part of progressive farming innovations and outlook, however, it is only after alternative agriculture has emerged as a commercially viable enterprise that it becomes part of the fundamental strength which "traditional" agriculture provides to rural America. Neither traditional nor alternative agriculture can be sustained at a level which offers hope for strengthening rural America unless public policy continues to favor investments in the future of agriculture.

Politics In A Small Delta Town

Robert Gray*



My presentation will be presented in two parts. First, what's wrong and bad about the Mississippi Delta from a political perspective vs. what's good about the politics here, and second, what do we do and where do we go from here to improve the situation.

The real and most perplexing problem in the Mississippi Delta, is that historically very few want to admit that there is a problem. When you refuse to admit that there is a problem, then there is sure not much going to take place to solve or improve the situation.

Ninety percent of all our actions and reactions are based on race. Very few will admit it, though. Too much energy, too much time, and too many resources are expended to circumvent the race problem.

Well, some here in this room and elsewhere will say that we're not the only ones or the only region faced with this problem of race. That's a national problem. But my answer would be that there is nowhere in this nation that the numbers match-up as they do in the Mississippi Delta.

There's no difference between black folks in the Mississippi Delta and those in any other section of the country. The difference is that there is just so many of us. We make up such a large portion of the total population. No civilized society can survive, let alone prosper, when such a large segment of its population is trapped in hopelessness and despair. And that's what we have here in the Mississippi Delta—a major portion of our population with no skills, no education, no money, and worst of all, no hope. By now I know some of you are probably thinking and saying to yourselves that the determination and inner drive to achieve and do better must come from the individual him or herself. But I say that's a cop-out and an evasion of the real truth. Oh, I would be a millionaire, probably several times over if I had a dollar for everytime some fat-cat has said to me, "I really do admire you, how you have worked hard and pulled yourself up by your own bootstraps." I know that's an invite for me to put my thumbs in my lapels and stick my chest out and say, "Yea, I'm a self made man." But Robert Gray knows how lucky he's been and continues to be.

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*Mayor, Shelby, Mississippi

There's not but two ways to escape this system if you're black, and that is to be extremely brilliant or extremely lucky. And there's just not that many of us who are either.

We don't have skills and motivation because our elementary and secondary educational systems are a disaster because those that we choose to operate these systems are ill-prepared. Most of them are hired on the basis of who they know, rather than what they know. Those who sit at the policy-making level of most systems of education here in the Delta didn't finish high school themselves. How can they make intelligent and rational decisions on education? They are just there to control dollars and to control people. All of us know that when you control dollars and people, that's power. Therefore, the power of education is in the wrong hands. You know education is just like the weather, everybody is talking about it, but very few are doing anything about it.

We were led to believe that when Blacks began to hold political office, things would get better. But things have gotten worse also, particularly in what we refer to as small Delta towns who gave Blacks significant political positions. They have become more black, more burned, more besieged, more bewildered, more bewitched, more barren, more burdened, more buffeted, and most of all more broke.

Blacks are viewed as merchants for change. We are usually elected to bring about a better way of life for Black people and they want it to take place overnight. Our people expect us to deliver overnight. They expect us to correct overnight, with little or no resources, what a system has put in place over two hundred years and with little or no resources.

I have come to adopt the opinion that politics without economics is a curse. Just like the School Board, City Hall is being filled not with politicians, but rather with politricians. He or she who can play the most tricks on, or who can buy the most votes from, an illiterate electorate is the one who gets elected. Hardly any credence is ever given to ability, honesty or character. This not only holds true for City Hall and School Boards, but throughout the political spectrum.

I think it was Booker T. Washington who said to the powers that be in the South, in his day in one of his masterpieces, "You can't keep blacks in a ditch unless you stay right there and keep one foot on them." Therefore, you circumscribe your own freedom of action. And that's what happened in the Mississippi Delta. We have expended too much energy, resource, and time trying to obstruct the progress and advancement of too large a segment of our population.

The good part about the Delta is that it's rich in natural resources that are important for a region to prosper. Rural Mississippi has an abundance of them. We just need to tap these resources and make them work for us for good, for the good of all the people, not just a few. We can no longer allow the majority of our resources and wealth to be in the hands of so few.

We must no longer look at education as an expense, but rather an investment. We must be willing to spend $2,000 educating a child each year, rather than $10,000 incarcerating him each year.

Something is wrong with a state that's willing to rank so high in it's penal system and so low in it's educational system.

We must begin to elect people to office based on their ability and willingness to serve, persons who can and will get things done; not persons who are elected to keep things from happening.

Persons who buy votes ought to be prosecuted and disqualified from holding office and persons who knowingly sell their vote to the highest bidder ought to be penalized by not allowing them to vote. And persons who just don't vote, ought to be taxed.

Persons of poor ability and character will continue to be elected if action is not taken.

Hopefully, a new breed of leadership is emerging in Mississippi and the Delta and I believe it is. Especially when I see youthful, aggressive, bold people starting to get elected. Those that are not afraid of criticism, but brave enough to admit that there is a problem and bold enough to demand a change. We just need more of them.

But when I see radical, suppressive organizations of youth springing up, it causes me to wonder if as much change is taking place as I had thought and hoped. One thing is evident: we are getting better or worse. We are definitely not standing still.

With the right people in place, and the right attitudes and programs, we just might be ready to emerge as the last frontier in this country. The natural resources are here, the people resources are here. They just need to be tapped and cultivated. And if we don't provide the opportunity for cultivation, all that I say and all that you say, is just rhetoric.

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